

824
C19Yj

Jalbert, Arthur



Activism of Thomas Carlyle

Return this book on or before the
Latest Date stamped below.

University of Illinois Library

JAN 14 1960

VIS 11

AUG 24 1963

JAN 11 1965

L161—H41



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2016

THE ACTIVISM
OF
THOMAS CARLYLE

THESIS

presented to the Faculty of Arts
Fribourg University, Switzerland
to obtain the degree of
DOCTOR IN PHILOSOPHY
by
ARTHUR JALBERT



TORINO
TIP. PALATINA DI G. BONIS E ROSSI
Via Giulio, N. 20
1921



THE ACTIVISM

OF

THOMAS CARLYLE

THESIS

presented to the Faculty of Arts
Fribourg University, Switzerland
to obtain the degree of
DOCTOR IN PHILOSOPHY

by

ARTHUR JALBERT



TORINO

TIP. PALATINA DI G. BONIS E ROSSI.

Via Giulio, N. 20

1921

824
C19Yf

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Bibliography	Page	v
Preface	»	3
Chap. 1. The Philosophy of Life	»	6
Chap. 2. Thomas Carlyle an Activist as shown by his Life	»	12
Chap. 3. Thomas Carlyle an Activist as shown by his Writings	»	25
Chap. 4. The Genesis of Carlyle's Philosophy of Life	»	37
Chap. 5. Criticism	»	44
Chap. 6. True Activism	»	56



BIBLIOGRAPHY

A

I. BIBLIOGRAPHIES.

SHEPHERD, R. H. *The Bibliography of Carlyle*. A bibliographical list arranged in chronological order of the published writings in prose and verse of Thomas Carlyle (from 1820-1881), 1881.

Notes and Queries. Series VI, vol. IV, pp. 145, 201 ff. 1881.

ANDERSON, J. P. *Carlyle Bibliography*. Appendix to Garnett, R., *Life of Thomas Carlyle*. 1887.

II. COLLECTED EDITIONS.

Collected Works (The Cheap and Uniform Edition). 16 vols, 1856-8.

Collected Works (Library edit.), 34 vols, 1869-71.

Collected Works (People's edit.), 37 vols, 1871-4.

Works (Ashburton edit.), 17 vols, 1885-7.

Works. Edition. Being the edition of 1856-8, to which is added the History of Frederick the Great, the whole being compressed into 11 vols.

III. SEPARATE WORKS OF THOMAS CARLYLE.

THE CHELSEA EDITION, which we have made the basis of our quotations, contains the following:

Sartor Resartus,

Heroes and Hero-Worship,

Chartism and

Past and Present, in one volume.

Four Volumes of Essays in two, thus:

Vol. I. Jean Paul Friederich Richter,
State of German Literature,
Life and Writings of Werner,

Goethe's Helena,
Goethe,
Burns,
Life of Heyne,
German Playwrights.

Vol. II. Voltaire,
Novalis,
Signs of the Times,
Jean Paul Friederich Richter again,
On History,
Luther's Psalm,
Schiller,
The Nibelungen Lied,
German Literature of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries.
Taylor's Historic Survey of German Poetry.

Vol. III. Characteristics,
Goethe's Portrait,
Biography,
Boswell's Life of Johnson,
Death of Goethe,
Goethe's Works,
Corn-Law Rhymes,
On History again,
Diderot,
Count Cagliostro :
 Flight First
 Flight Last,
Death of Edward Irving.

Vol. IV. The Diamond Necklace,
Mirabeau,
Parliamentary History of the French Revolution,
Sir Walter Scott,
Varnhagen von Ense's Memoirs,
Petition on the Copyright Bill,
On the Sinking of the Vengeur,
Baillie the Covenanter,
Dr. Francia,
An Election to the Long Parliament,
Two-Hundred-and-Fifty Years ago,
The Opera,
Project of a National Exhibition of Scottish Portraits,
The Prinzenraub.

Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship and Travels, in one volume.

Life of Friedrich Schiller and

Life of John Sterling, in one volume.

Latter-day Pamphlets, containing:

Occasional Discourse on the Nigger Question (prefixed).

I. The Present Time,

II. Model Prisons,

III. Downing Street,

IV. The New Downing Street,

V. Stump-Orator,

VI. Parliaments,

VII. Hudson's Statue,

VIII. Jesuitism,... together with.

Translations from the German (Musaeus, Tieck, and Richter.) in one volume.

The French Revolution, in one volume.

Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches, crowded into one volume.

History of Frederick the Great, in three volumes.

*
* *

Found only in some editions, are the following:

The Early Kings of Norway,

An Essay on the Portraits of John Knox,

Historical Sketches of Noted Persons and Events in the Reigns of James I
and Charles I.

Critical and Miscellaneous Essays:

Preface to the Second Edition of « Meister »,

The Tale,

The Novelle,

Inaugural Address at Edinburgh,

Shooting Niagara, and After,

Fractions,

Latter Stage of the French-German War, 1870-1,

Poems,

Preface to « German Romance »

Musaeus, Fouqué, Tieck, Hoffmann, Richter,

Aslauga's Knight (Translated from the German of Fouqué),

The Golden Pot (Translated from the German of Hoffmann),

Montaigne,

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu,

Montesquieu ,

The Netherlands,
William Pitt, Earl of Chatham,
William Pitt the Younger, Necker,
Cruthers and Jonson; or, The Outskirts of Life.

All these are found in the Centenary Edition.

* * *

Not collected in any of the above editions are the following:
Elements of Geometry and Trigonometry; with notes. Translated from the French of A. M. Legendre by Thomas Carlyle. (The introductory chapter on Proportion is by the translator). Edinburgh, 1824.
Wotton Reinfried. Fragment of a novel.
Lectures on German Literature. 1837.
Lectures on History of Literature. 1838.
Lectures on European Revolutions, 1839.
Preface to Emerson's Essays. 1841, 44, 53.
Historical Sketches, written between 1842 & 1843.
Excursion (futile enough) to Paris. 1851.
Letters on the War between Germany and France. 1871.
Reminiscences. Ed. Froude, J. A. 2 vols. 1881.
Reminiscences of my Irish Journey in 1849. 1882.
Last Words of Carlyle. On Trades-Unions, Promoterism, and Signs of the Times. Ed. Aitken, J. C. Edinburgh, 1882.
Letters and Memorials of Jane Welsh Carlyle, prepared for publication by Thomas Carlyle and ed. Froude, J. A. 3 vols. 1883.
Last Words of Carlyle. Wotton Reinfried. Excursion to Paris. Letters. 1892.
New Letters and Memorials of Jane Welsh Carlyle, annotated by Thomas Carlyle, and ed. by Carlyle, A. 1903.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO MAGAZINES AND REVIEWS.

Articles in the Edinburgh Encyclopedia. Vol. XIV (1820): Montfaucon; Dr. John Moore; Sir John Moore. Vol. XV (1822): Necker; Nelson; Newfoundland; Norfolk; Northamptonshire; Northumberland. Vol. XVI (1823): Mungo Park.
Joanna Baillie's Metrical Legends. New Edinburgh Review. Vol. I. Oct. 1821.
Goethe's Faust. New Edinburgh Review. Vol. II. Apr. 1882.
Jean P. F. Richter's Review of Madame de Staël's *De l'Allemagne*.
Cui bono? and Four Fables by Pilpay Junior. *Ib.* Vol. II. Sept. 1830.
Thoughts on History. *Ib.* Vol. II. Nov. 1830.
Peter Nimmo; a Rhapsody. *Ib.* Vol. III. Feb. 1831.
The Sower's Song. *Ib.* Vol. III. Apr. 1831.

- The Beetle Ib. Vol. III. Feb. 1831.
Tragedy of the Night-Moth. Ib. Vol. IV. Aug. 1831.
Louis Philippe. Examiner. Mar. 4, 1848.
Repeal of the Union. Ib. Apr. 28, 1848.
Legislation for Ireland. Ib. May 13, 1848.
Ireland and the British Chief Governor. Irish Regiments (of the new era).
Spectator. May 13, 1848.
Death of Charles Buller, Examiner. Dec. 2, 1848.
From Mr. Bramble's Unpublished Arboretum Hibernicum. Nation. Dec.
1849.
Keepsake for 1852.
Proceedings of Society of Scotch Antiquaries.
Memoranda on Leigh Hunt. Macmillian's Magazine. Vol. VI. July. 1862.
Illias (Americana) in Nuce. The American Illiad in a Nutshell. Ib.
Vol. VIII. Aug. 1863.

IV. COLLECTED CORRESPONDENCE.

- Letters to Mrs. B. Montague and B. W. Procter (1881).
Correspondence of Carlyle and Emerson. Ed. Norton, C. E. 2 vols. (1883)
2nd. edit. Boston. 1886.
Early Letters of Carlyle. Ed. Norton, C. E. 1887.
Correspondence between Goethe and Carlyle. Ed. Norton, C. E. 1887.
Letters, 1826-36. Ed. Norton, C. E. 2 vols. 1888.
Early Letters of Jane Welsh Carlyle with some of Thomas Carlyle. 1889.
Letters of Carlyle to his Youngest Sister. 1899.
New Letters of Carlyle. Ed. and annotated by Carlyle, A. 2 vols. 1904, 07.
Love Letters of Carlyle and Jane Welsh. Ed. Carlyle, A. 2 vols. 1909.
For a long list of Biographical and Critical Works, see The Cambridge.
History of English Literature. Vol. XIII, pp. 470-473.
-

B

List of Books Quoted in the Cours of this Thesis.

- BALMES, Rev. James. *Fundamental Philosophy*. (Eng. translation by Henry Brownson, M. A.) Sadlier & Co. New York. 1856.
- BERGSON, H. : *Introduction à la Métaphysique* (Rev. de Métaphysique et de Morale, t. 11, p. 1-36, janvier 1903).
- BUATHIER, l'Abbé J. M. ; *Le Sacrifice*. Beauchesne et Cie. Paris, 1908.
- CARLYLE, T. : *Inaugural Address*. In Carlyle's Scottish and Other Miscellanies (pp. 143-172). Everyman's Library. Dent, London, or E. P. Dutton & Co. New York.
- Essays on Goethe*. Faustus. Tauchnitz. vol. 4513.
- ĀZAMIAN, Louis : *Carlyle* (Les Grands Ecrivains Etrangers). Bloud, Paris. 1913.
- DUVAL, F. : *Les Livres qui s'imposent*. Beauchesne, Paris. 7ième édit. 1913.
- EMERSON, R. W. : *English Traits and Representative Men* (The World's Classics. vol. XXX). Henry Frowde, Oxford University Press. London. 1911.
- FROUDE, J. A. : *Thomas Carlyle. A History of the First Forty Years of His Life*. 1795-1835 (2 vols. quoted as Froude I and II in this thesis). Longmans, London. 1896.
- » *Thomas Carlyle. A History of His Life in London*. 1834-1881 (2 vols. quoted as Froude III and IV, in this thesis). Longmans, London. 1890.
- GOETHE, W. : *Wilhelm Meister*, in Carlyle's translation.
- Faust*.
- GRATRY, le R. P. : *Une étude de la Sophistique contemporaine*. Lecoffre et Cie. Paris. 1863.
- MASSON, D. : *Carlyle's Edinburgh Life in Edinburgh Sketches and Memories*. London, 1892.
- MATZ, B. W. : *Thomas Carlyle*. Chapman and Hall. London. 1902.
- DE MUNNYNCK, M. : Unpublished lectures on
- Psychologia Generalis*.
- La Place de l'Homme dans la Nature*.
- La Psychologie des Phénomènes Religieux*.
- La Théorie de la Connaissance*.

NOTE. It is greatly to be desired that these excellent lectures be soon given to the Public.

- NEWMAN, J. H. Cardinal: *Loss and Gain*,
Grammar of Assent,
Discussions and Arguments. Longmans, Green & Co. New
York. 1903.
- NICHOL, J.: *Thomas Carlyle*. English Men of Letters Series. 2nd. edit.
Macmillian, London, New York. 1902.
- OLLE-LAPRUNE, L.: *Le Prix de la Vie*. Belin Frères. Paris. 1894.
- PENIDO, M.: *La Méthode intuitive de M. Bergson*. Alcan, Paris. 1918.
- RICKABY, J.: *Moral Philosophy*. Benziger Bros. New York. 1889.
- ROBERTSON, J. G.: Article on *Carlyle* in the Cambridge History of
English Literature. edit. 1916. vol. XIII. pp. 1-22. London.
- ST. JAMES' GAZETTE for February 11, 1881.
- TAINE, H.: *Histoire de la Littérature Anglaise*. Deuxième édit. Hachette,
Paris, 1869.
- THOMAE AQUINATIS: *Summa Theologica*,
Summa Contra Gentiles,
Sententiae. Venetiis, 1594.
- THOMPSON, F.: *Stray Thoughts on Shelly*. Collected Works. Burns
& Oates. London. 1913.
- TISSOT, le R. P.: *La vie intérieure simplifiée et ramenée à son fondement*.
Beauchesne. Paris. 1918.
- TURNER, W.: *History of Philosophy*. Ginn & Co. New York. 1903.
- WARNER, P.: *Thomas Carlyle*. Chapman and Hall. London. 1904.
- WILDE, O.: *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Tauchnitz Edit. of British
Authors. vol. 4049.
Intentions. The English Library. No. 54.
-
-

PREFACE

It is with no little hesitation that we undertake to write a critical paper on Carlyle. According to one of his biographers (1), something like 2,000 volumes or essays have been written in the attempt to « depict Carlyle and to judge of his works » and this in spite of his protest that « the world will never know my life, if it should write and read a hundred biographies of me » (2), for « the chief elements of my little destiny have all along lain deep below view or surmise, and never can or will be known to any son of Adam » (3).

On this point, we think otherwise. A man who has written so much and so earnestly (4) must needs be manifested in his works, for « out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh » (5). The man is best judged by his works. We have Carlyle's own words for it. Speaking of Goethe's inimitable style, he adds: « As hard is it to discover in his writings, — *though there also, as in every man's writings, the character of the writer must lie recorded* (6) — what sort of spiritual construction he has etc... » (7). And again « it was my favorite employment to read character in speculation and from the Writing construe the Writer » (8).

(1) Percy Warner. *Thomas Carlyle*, p. 5.

(2) *Journal* for Oct. 10, 1843, or Froude III, p. 1.

(3) *Journal* for Dec. 29, 1848, or Froude III, p. 1.

(4) Concerning his earnestness, John Nichol, in his life (p. 69) has the following: « He not only disdained to write a word he did not believe, he would not suppress a word he did believe a rule of action fatal to swift success ».

(5) St. Luke VI, 45.

(6) The italics are ours.

(7) *Essay on Goethe* (1828) Essays. Vol. I, p. 185.

(8) *Sartor Resartus*, Bk. II, Ch. 3, p. 70.

In fact, it is the opinion of Francis Thompson that the man is better seen in his works than in his daily life. « The difference between the true poet in his poetry and in his letters or personal intercourse, is just the difference between two states of the same man; between the metal live from the forge and the metal chill. But, chill or glowing, the metal is equally itself. If difference there be, it is the metal in glow that is the truer to itself. For, cold, it may be overlaid with dirt, obscured with dust; but afire, all these are scorched away » (1).

To conceal one's opinions, one's affections, in a word, one's self in the literary productions of a lifetime, is well nigh impossible. Doubtless there are degrees of this revelation of self, but « truth must out » (2). Carlyle's biographers evidently agree with us here. Otherwise they would never have taken pen in hand either for or against him.

But it may be asked: « How can anyone expect to say something new, seeing the great number of essays already written? Has not everything been said and resaid? Have not fond admirers exalted him to the sky? Have not hostile minds laid bare his defects and belittled his qualities? Finally have not unbiased students done justice to the man? ». We think not. As is frequently the case, many of these essays are extremely superficial. Others are mere repetitions, written, as we imagine, not after a careful study of the author's works, but by unverified selections from existing criticisms. Of the real critical works, none, as far as we know, treat *ex professo* of the subject we have in hand. Consequently, we think it possible and even useful to add a new book to the existent bibliography of Carlyle.

We are to criticise. But « the critic is, in virtue of his office, a judge and not an advocate. He is not to do favor, but to dispense justice, which, in most cases will involve blame as well as praise » (3).

It is in this spirit that we approach our task. We are to do justice. However only one charge is submitted to our court, namely that of Activism. We shall examine the 'pros and cons' and pronounce our sentence. Unfortunately our decision will contain much blame as well as praise.

Why then choose such a subject? « It is a much shallower and more ignoble occupation to detect faults than to discover beauties » says Car-

(1) *Stray Thoughts on Shelley*. The Works of Francis Thompson, Vol. III, Prose, p. 286. Burns & Oates Ltd., London, 1913.

(2) Carlyle again offers us a fitting quotation: « The good Richter begins to show himself... before we have read many pages of even his slightest work; and to the last he paints himself much better than his subject. Byron may also be said to have painted nothing else than himself, be his subject what it might ». *Essay on Goethe* (1828), Essays Vol. I, p. 186. See also *Jean Paul F. Richter again* (1830) in Essays Vol. II, p. 122.

(3) *Essay on Goethe* (1828). Essays, Vol. I, p. 191.

lyle (1). We are fully conscious of the fact and are ready to accept many a thankless comment from friends of the Scotch Writer, for holding up to public gaze, an intellectual malady of their idol. Still, — *Amicus Plato, magis amica veritas*, — we feel obliged to point out the disease and thus, by putting readers of Carlyle on their guard, prevent to some extent, the possible danger of corruption.

Carlyle's works, abounding in beautiful passages, striking images and pictures full of humor, pathos and eloquence offer great attractions to the careful reader. It is this very attractiveness which constitutes their greatest danger, for it is to be feared that while enjoying such beauties as Carlyle can offer, his readers become imbued with the numerous errors — philosophical and moral — which lurk under real beauty of form. To prevent such a disaster, we have taken upon ourself the « much shallower and more ignoble occupation » of unmasking, refuting and antidoting Carlyle's Activism, leaving to others the more agreeable task of exposing his beauties.

Should our humble efforts meet with approval, however slight, on the part of our readers, we shall feel well repaid for our pains (2).

(1) *Ibid.*

(2) It is our intention to revise and enlarge this dissertation at some future date. Certain circumstances necessitate the publication in its present form. We have already received some valuable suggestions from learned critics and shall gratefully welcome more.

CHAPTER I.

The Philosophy of Life.

Among the many great questions that confront the thinking men of all ages, nay, foremost among them, since upon it depends their whole conduct, is the « problem of life ». Great as is this question, comparatively few are they who even *propose* it to themselves in a formal way; fewer still, they who solve it to their entire satisfaction.

Speaking of the acquisition and development of the use of reason in man, St. Thomas (1) distinguishes three septennates. During the first, he says, the child neither thinks by himself nor by others. From the age of seven to fourteen (*circiter*) he thinks for himself but only with the help of others. Thenceforth he thinks for himself, aided by others, only in so far as he wills.

It is then in the third septennate and onwards that man ordinarily encounters questions of vital importance. But we repeat, they are few who give the problem of life a personal solution. The vast majority of mankind, namely the working class, have neither the leisure nor the ability to study such a gigantic question, which of itself has absorbed and will continue to absorb the entire life of master minds. For the ordinary man, the solution of his ancestors suffices. He lives and toils, guided and consoled by such beliefs as were handed down in loving heritage by his forebears.

Others — and these mostly of the educated class — are assailed by the question, but refuse to give battle. They take refuge in some trench or other. « Some leave it to settle itself; some, when they get in the region of doubt, turn back, regain and contentedly travel on in future by the old road... Others feel unable to do this; they must continue to struggle on through darkness, uncertainty, perhaps despair, until eventually they reach what is for them surer ground, more certain light (2).

(1) *Sententiae*. Liber IV, D. 27, Q. 2, Art. 3. Solutio.

(2) Percy Warner. *Op. cit.*, p. 18.

I

The young man sets forth on the sea of life in his family vessel, sailing under his father's colors. As yet he has no opinions of his own. Family traditions and early training have formed his ideas. It is not till he enters man's estate and for the first time becomes conscious of his independent personality and consequent responsibilities, that he casts a backward glance and contemplates the ground already travelled (1). Then he becomes a critic. He questions every assertion, tries every opinion, accepts very little on faith. Not even his family traditions escape (2).

He feels the need and hence arises the right and duty to examine the basis of his past faith. In the endeavor to rationalize his tenets, he begins at the very bottom. Who am I? Whence do I come? Whither am I going? What is life? What is its origin? What its law? What its end?... These are so many questions which he who thinks must put to himself, and, despite their difficulty, solve one way or another, for even while trying to find a satisfactory solution, he must live and act. And since every moral act (3) is performed in view of some ultimate end (4), it is clear that either consciously or unconsciously he actually possesses

(1) « Who does not changes his opinions between twenty and thirty? » asks Newman. « A young man enters life with his father's or tutor's views; he changes them for his own. The more modest and diffident he is, the more faith he has, so much the longer does he speak the words of others; but the force of circumstances or the vigour of his mind infallibly obliges him at last to have a mind of his own; that is, if he is good for anything » (*Loss and Gain*, p. 190).

(2) There are some who carry this natural sentiment of self-sufficiency to ridiculous extremes. A well-known French writer has an interesting passage on the subject. In part he says: There is not a young man of our day but believes himself a competent judge of Christianity. And he asks whether it is really true that a judgement of such importance which, in most cases, is kept unchanged during life, is taken by striplings. « Who does not know the student », he continues, « who, at a certain age declares that he no longer believes in anything? For him, teachers, parents, Church, tradition, great men, noted writers and famous centuries, Bossuet, Fenelon, Pascal and the rest are all nothing but falsehood, foolishness, superstition, darkness. Himself, he knows what to hold, and he holds it ».

P. Gratry, *de la Sophistique contemporaine*, p. 88.

(3) By a moral or human act, we understand with philosophers, every act which proceeds from man as man, that is, every *deliberate voluntary* act.

(4) Cf. St. Thomas. *Summa theo.* Ia, IIae Q. I. art. 4-7. The ultimate or last end is that which is intended for itself, without reference to anything beyond. Cf. below. Ch. VI, p. 56. Aristotle defines it thus « That which is the end of all means but which is never a means itself » ((*Metaphys.* 994 b, 9).

some aspect of life — be it provisional or definite — which is the rule and guide of his whole conduct.

The solution of this momentous question is called the «Philosophy of Life» (1). By this phrase we mean the aspect under which we view nature, man's place therein and his relations thereto, — which aspect then becomes the *unifying principle* of our whole life and the «why» of our actions.

Not to remain longer in the abstract, let us straightway take a concrete example. A university professor, for instance, is a man of unusual activity. Like other men he eats, sleeps and recreates himself, but why? Not simply to enjoy himself, but chiefly to care for the health of that body which is the indispensable instrument of the intellect. Thus he performs a multitude of acts which have as their center «bodily health». But this is not aimed at as an end; it is but a means. He reads much, meditates, converses with learned men—why? To aid him in the composition of his lectures. These he prepares with care, commits to memory, and delivers with such skill as he has at his command. Thus is formed another group of actions having as its center the professional duties of his state in life. Again, man is a social being, an integral part of society towards which he has certain duties called civic or patriotic. As a member of a family, of a religious sect, of a commercial firm etc., he has still other duties which gyrate around some central point thus forming other groups. But all these different groups, are they independent one from another? By no means. Man is one and by a natural impulse, all his activities tend to unite, to converge towards one superior center which we call the last end and which is the *unifying principle* of his conduct and the basis of his philosophy of life.

There are several of these so-called philosophies, though many are absurd and worthless. Still, the fact that these false philosophies are actually held by whole classes of men, obliges us to examine them in passing, more especially as Activism figures among them.

As is frequently the case with divisions, our distinction of the several philosophies of life is methodic rather than real. For man, being possessed of various faculties, each clamoring for activity, cannot exercise one during his whole life or for any length of time, to the utter exclusion of the others. One and the same individual may have a composite philosophy of life, made up of equally balanced elements or of elements arranged hierarchically, now one, now another presiding. Hence no type exists in all its purity. Our division, then, is based rather on the actual predominant activity of one faculty over the others.

(1) The Germans call it «Weltanschauung».

II.

Life is for happiness. That all men seek to be happy is an undeniable fact founded on human nature, and a principle, common to all philosophies of life (1). According as some place their happiness in this, others in that there arises a certain differential character proper to each.

Hardly possessed of a philosophy at all (2) are those who lead a bestial life — βροσκημάτων βίον — as Aristotle says. We shall call them « jouisseurs » for convenience sake. For them life is a huge banquet. Let each get all he can, regardless of his fellows. Eat, drink, make merry, for tomorrow we die... With such we will have nothing to do. But while not actually pausing to express our opinion on those who lead a « bestial life », we cannot but quote the beautiful lines of Carlyle himself. They refer to Faust who had given himself to the devil, but may, with equal justice, be applied to these human beasts: « He seems as if he had thrown away the crown of his manhood, which though it galled his brow, was still a crown. He had become a slave that he might avoid the duties of a king; and the pleasures of a slave not suited to his nature » (3).

With a real philosophy and more dignified manners live the refined Epicureans. These, while avoiding gross excess, still seek sensual enjoyment to which everything, even virtue, is made subservient. To this class belong persons in easy circumstances, devoid of all practical religion and innocent of supernatural views on this life and the possibility of a hereafter. « This life is ours. Let us make the best of it, rather than trust to a hazy future. The greatest amount of respectable pleasure, with the least amount of pain or trouble ». Such is their language and such their conduct. Dilettanti in art, science and literature, and Dandies in dress, they use all these and more to procure new sensations and emotions. « To cure the soul by the senses and the senses by the soul » is a great secret of life known and practised by these re-

(1) In spite of appearances to the contrary (cf. below., p. 21), Carlyle does not renounce altogether the desire to be happy. He simply seeks happiness through action and love of sorrow, instead of through pleasure, honor, health etc., as formerly.

(2) We make this reserve as there is such a thing as « Pig Philosophy ». To be convinced, the reader has but to refer to Carlyle's essay on *Jesuitism* (*Latter day Pamphlets* No. 8, p. 266 et seq.), where he will find a number of propositions of the said philosophy. As they mostly center about the « swine-trough » and its contents, we beg to be excused from reproducing them here.

(3) *Faustus* (1822), p. 23. *Essays on Goethe*. Tauchnitz Edition, vol. 4513.

finer Hedonists. The more advanced have pleasures, the mere description of which is hard to follow for its subtlety (1).

Next in order comes a class of people whom we may call Apollos or lovers of the « beautiful ». In all men there is a secret aspiration after the beautiful, but for some this instinct becomes a passion and all their energies are spent in the pursuit of the beautiful under its million forms. Now, it is Nature with her varying aspects, her glorious sunsets, her starry heavens, her majestic mountains; again, it is some human work of art—a picture, a statue, a building, a page of a book, or better still, some human being, a ray of the divinity itself, and the very incarnation of beauty (2). For them there is no such thing as morality (3), no virtue, no vice, no God. What is beautiful is good. The rest has no importance. Living in the ideal world of beauty and artistic creation — the product of their imagination — they give but little place to the intellect, the intense workings of which tend to destroy beauty (4).

More worthy of respect are philosophers and scientists who devote their whole life to serious study in search of « truth ». With infinite pains, scientists try to wring from nature the secret laws by which she and they are governed, confident that when once they have mastered her mysterious language, they will possess true happiness in the glorious apotheosis to which such a knowledge of nature will give rise (5).

Philosophers go still further. They strive by the light of reason to attain the eternal truth, or ponder with infinite delight on the partial

(1) As an example of this we may mention a very dangerous book: *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, by Oscar Wilde. The language and conduct of Lord Henry and his protégé, Dorian Gray, are illustrative of our assertion.

(2) Cf. *Le Sacrifice* by Buathier, p. 444.

(3) Oscar Wilde says: « No artist has ethical sympathies. An ethical sympathy in an artist is an unpardonable mannerism of style ». (*The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Preface). According to him: « Society, which is the beginning and basis of morals, exists simply for the concentration of human energy ». It is his opinion that « All art is immoral. For emotion for the sake of emotion is the aim of art, and emotion for the sake of action is the aim of life.... Art has no influence on action. It annihilates the desire to act. It is superbly sterile ». (*Critic as Artist* in « *Intentions* », p. 137).

(4) « Real beauty ends where an intellectual expression begins. Intellect is in itself a mode of exaggeration and destroys the harmony of any face. The moment one sits down to think, one becomes all nose, or all forehead or something horrid. Look at the successful men in any of the learned professions. How perfectly hideous they are. Except of course in the Church. But then, in the Church they don't think. A bishop keeps on saying at the age of eighty what he was told to say when he was a boy eighteen, and as a natural result, he always looks absolutely delightful ». (*Picture of Dorian Gray*, pp. 9-10).

(5) Cf. H. Taine. *Histoire de la littérature anglaise*, t. III, liv. IV, ch. 11, pp. 608-613. This conception of life has been fully described by Ollé-Laprune, *Le Prix de la Vie*, Ch. IX.

truths already ascertained. Given rather to speculation, the little action they do is measured and directed by thought.

This last attitude is unnatural, say the Activists, for speculation, pure and simple, is sterile unless it pass into action. And as « life is for action », those who make speculation an end may be said not to live. Besides being sterile, speculation is dangerous as prolific of doubt and as leading to skepticism. Dangerous for self, it is likewise unjust to others. Man is a social being, and, as such, has certain duties towards his fellow men. Now when he devotes himself exclusively to speculation, he avoids communion with others and lives totally for self.

Protesting loudly against this egoistical aspect of life and disdaining equally a life of ease and comfort, Activists lay great stress on the will. Man's duty is to work. Let each find what he can work at, and that let him do. Such is Nature's command. Doubt of any kind is removed by action. Do that duty which lies nearest thee and thy next duty will be made clear. Thus will a fruitful activity be assured and possessing that, we possess all, since « the end of life is an action » (1).

Each of the foregoing aspects of life considers man as his own end. But on mature consideration it will appear that as man is not his own beginning, neither is he his last end. There is, outside of him, a superior power which made him and on whom he depends for existence. This great unknown is conceived as good or evil, and is accordingly loved or feared. When this cult of a supreme being becomes a principle of unification for one's whole life, we have what is called religion (2) — the foundation of a life - theory whereby man rises superior to himself and lives solely for God.

These we believe, are the different philosophies of life which divide mankind. Each contains some principle of unification — love of sensual pleasure, love of the beautiful, love of truth, love of action, love of God — whence the life of man receives its unity and its value. Every life which is fecund, is unified. But no life is perfectly unified. A great number of acts escape us which are not performed in view of the proposed end. These are lost.

The larger the principle of unification, the nobler is one's life. He who lives but for sensual pleasure, is a beast. He who lives for beauty's sake, begins to live as a man. He who seeks truth is a philosopher. He who lives for action may accomplish much, but is liable to become a mere machine. He who unites in himself all these aspects and lives for God is a perfect man. Such a one takes an *integral aspect* of life, which alone is worthy of man.

(1) This brief exposition of Activism will be supplemented and illustrated by many quotations found in chapters 2 and 3.

(2) Religion is here defined psychologically.

CHAPTER II.

Thomas Carlyle an Activist as shown by his Life.

John Nichol says of Carlyle (1): «It is impossible accurately to define his religious, social or political creed. He swallows formulae with the voracity of Mirabeau and like Proteus escapes analysis. *No printed labels will stick to him*». In general we agree with the learned critic, for Carlyle presents a striking versatility on certain points. His political friends, for instance, were often scandalized by his apparent apostasy from their cause. However that may be, there are some opinions which he held unswervingly through life and one of these is «Activism», a label which *will* stick to him as shall appear from this and the following chapter.

To account for this attitude in Carlyle, we propose to examine his life and underline the chief factors which led him to Activism.

Carlyle's life may be divided into three periods of unequal length. The first, comprising the years of primary education and ending with his fourteenth year, may be styled as uniformly «religious». The second, dating from the first year of university life (1809) is a period of sore trial, moral and physical, under which he succumbs, and lives for a time in «irreligion». Follow a sort of conversion, the formation of a new theory of life, and finally the application of that theory, a long life of incessant toil.

I.

The child is father of the man. «On the all-but omnipotence of early culture and nurture» (2) depends much in after life. Carlyle makes it a «duty for all men to note down with accuracy the characteristic circumstances of their education, what furthered, what hindered, what in any way modified it» (3). With which obligation he has faithfully complied in the account of himself left us in *Sartor Resartus* and in his *Reminiscences and Letters*.

Of his early years he has many a glowing description, Still he adds «Nevertheless I were but a vain dreamer to say that even then my felicity was perfect. Among the rainbow colors that glowed on my

(1) *Carlyle*, p. 7.

(2) *Sartor Resartus*. Bk. II, ch. 2, p. 57.

(3) *Sartor Resartus*. Bk. II, ch. 2, p. 57.

horison, lay even in childhood a dark ring of Care, as yet no thicker than a thread, and often quite overshadowed; yet always it reappeared, nay ever waxing broader and broader; till in after years it almost overshadowed my whole canopy and threatened to engulf me in final night »... « My active power was unfavorably hemmed in; of which misfortune how many traces yet abide with me. ' In an orderly house where the litter of childrens' sports is hateful enough, your training is too stoical; rather to bear and forebear than to make and do. I was forbid much: wishes in any measure bold I had to renounce; everywhere a strait bond of obedience inflexibly held me down. My upbringing was rigorous, too frugal, compressively secluded, everyway unscientific » (1).

If we seek the reason of so severe an education, we shall find it in the religion of his parents. Carlyle's parents were practical Calvinists who lived up to their belief and squared their life accordingly. Now, their religion taught that « The world is the closed field where God has placed man to fear Him and to serve Him; against the movements of nature and sin, the will must wage incessant war; the passions, pride, indolence, these are the snares of the enemy; true grace consists in finding one's daily task; on the energetic immolation of self must the painful triumph of salvation be reared day by day. In this gospel of penance and warfare, the law of love finds but little place » (2).

Frugality and assiduity, under the patriarchal authority of a stern father were the order of the Carlyle household. « We were all particularly taught that work (temporal and spiritual) was the only thing we had to do, and incited always by precept and example to do it well » (3).

Here we have the keynote to his whole life. Though this doctrine was subsequently based on other motives than those of religion, it was ever his polar-star, guiding him through life, inciting to personal activity, and constituting the new gospel which he preached to mankind.

Such were the circumstances under which Carlyle started out on his life journey. At the age of five, he attended the village school, but he says: « Of the insignificant portion of my education which depended on schools, there need almost no notice be taken. I learned what others learn; and kept it stored-by in a corner of my head seeing as yet no manner of use in it. My Schoolmaster pronounced me a genius fit for the learned professions and said that I must be sent to the Gymnasium and one day to the University. Meanwhile what printed thing soever I could meet with, I read. My very copper pocket-money I laid-out on stall literature; which, as it accumulated, I with my own hands sewed

(1) *Ibid*, p. 60.

(3) Cazamian. « *Ecrivains Etrangers* » *Carlyle*, p. 16.

(2) *Reminiscences*. Vol. I, p. 55.

into volumes. By this means was the young head furnished with a considerable miscellany of things and shadows of things » (1).

Over his Gymnastic and Academic years, Carlyle lingers, but only to vituperate. Bullying from barbarous classmates drew from him floods of tears, which fact merited for him the surname of « the tearful ». « My teachers », says he, « were hide-bound pedents » (2) and he explains in so many words that they did not correspond to what *he* thought they should be. At any rate he learned enough to enter the University, which important fact is a landmark in his life.

II.

We have hitherto seen Carlyle as an apprentice in life's workshop. We have noticed what use he made of « those earliest tools which a man gets to handle » (3) his class books. Now that he is to launch his bark out into the open and leave for a considerable length of time the paternal roof, a little inventory of his actual possessions, physical, moral and intellectual may not be altogether out of place here.

Physically he was strong and healthy, having as yet no symptoms of the disorder which became his bugbear in after life. Poor and unknown, he had but few friends, nor were his moody ways, his love of solitude (4) his rugged independence apt to gain him more. These undesirable qualities took their rise in, and were fostered by his early education. He complains that as a child, he durst not *love* his father. Later, at school, the conduct of barbarous associates estranged him more and more from society and were it not for Irving, he assures us he « would never have known what the communion of man with man meant » (5).

To those who knew him well, he appeared possessed of great strength of character, remarkable literary talents, high aspirations and ambi-

(1) *Sartor Resartus*. Bk. II. Ch. III, p. 62.

(2) *Sartor Resartus*. Bk. II, Ch. III, p. 64.

(3) *Sartor Resartus*, p. 62.

(4) Was his love of books the cause of his love of solitude, or was reading only a means to occupy himself in solitude? Both one and the other, we believe. A friend of his who signed himself Peter Pindar bears witness to Carlyle's habit of reading, in a letter dated Jan. 1, 1814. « There are joys and sorrows, pleasures and pains, with which a Stoic, Platonic, humdrum *bookworm* sort of a fellow like you, Sir, intermeddleth not, and consequently can have no idea of ». Froude I, p. 31.

(5) *Death of Edward Irving*. Essays. Vol. III, p. 299.

tion (1), which qualities were sadly overshadowed by «habitual despondency and a variety of other humors» (2).

Owing to mechanical teaching, or more correctly, to the failure of genius to adapt itself to the requirements and restrictions of great educational institutions, necessitated by the average mind, Carlyle became his own teacher. «What I have found the University did for me», said Carlyle many years later (1866), «is that it taught me to read in various languages, in various sciences; so that I could get into books which treated of these things and gradually penetrate into any department I wanted to make myself master of» (3). Indeed this manner of self education, started in grammar school and carried on at the university, seems to be the only method Carlyle ever followed. Rightly or wrongly, we lay great stress on this fact, namely his *extensive indiscriminate reading*, as contributing largely to the loss of his religion, which, in turn, led to the great crisis of his life.

That a youth of fourteen could read, or, as he says, «devour» all the books he could get hold of, and not receive any harm thereby, is, we say, a moral impossibility. It is all very well to have been pronounced «complete in English» at the age of seven, but that is not enough. A thorough knowledge of sound philosophy and even some theology are necessary for a safe reading of certain authors. Now we are told that Carlyle «cared nothing for the classics and little more for metaphysics or moral philosophy» (4). How then could he escape with a

(1) That he was ambitious is a fact acknowledged in a note to Thomas Murray: «Ever since I have been able to form a wish, the wish of being known has been the foremost. Oh, Fortune! bestow coronets and crowns and principalities and power, upon the great and noble ones of the earth. Grant *me* that, with a heart unyielding to thy favors and unbending to thy frowns, *I may attain to literary fame*». In justice, let us add that as he grew older, Carlyle came to fear and even to hate *fame*. We quote one passage out of many: «The longer I live, fame seems to me a more wretched *Kimmera*, really and truly a thing to be shied of if it came. I think of Rousseau's case sometimes, and pray God I might be enabled to break whinstone rather, or cut peat, and maintain an unfettered heart. God keep us all, I pray again, from the madness of popularity. I never knew one whom it did not injure. I have known strong men whom it killed. (*Letter to John Carlyle*. March 21, 1837. Already at the age of 26 he could write: «For as to fame and all that, I see it already to be nothing better than a meteor, a will-o'-the-wisp which leads one on through quagmires and pitfalls to catch an object which when we have caught it, turns out to be nothing». (*Letter to his Mother*. Jan. 30, 1821). Froude I, p. 96.

(2) Masson. «Carlyle's Edinburgh Life» in «*Edinburgh Sketches and Memories*», p. 243.

(3) *Inaugural Address* as Lord Rector, Edinburgh, p. 148.

(4) B. W. Matz. *Thomas Carlyle*, p. 7.

healthy mind? Mistaken notions, false conceptions, prejudices, gross errors — such as we find in his writings — these, we believe, were the immediate result of his self-conducted studies. What we know for certain is that doubt seized his mind about this time. The reading of Hume, Gibbon, Voltaire, Rousseau and other writers of the same stamp completed the work already begun (1), and he abandoned the study of divinity, a step, rather to be admired under the circumstances as springing from deep sincerity. He would not teach others what he himself disbelieved (2). That he had ceased to hold the religion of his youth appears from his own confession: « It was just here (on the road leading from Glasgow to Ecclefechan) as the sun was sinking, Irving drew from me by degrees, in the softest manner, that I did not think as he of the Christian religion, and that it was vain for me to expect I ever could or should » (3).

This was in 1817. Next year saw him again in Edinburgh where he undertook the study of law, which he soon found to be as « uncongenial a study as divinity » and which shared a like fate.

Already in 1814, on the completion of his college course, Carlyle had taught mathematics at Annan. This position he held till 1816, when the inhabitants of Kirkcaldy invited him to take charge of a new school in their town. But he soon tired of that too. « Better die than be a school-master for one's living », he wrote in one of his letters.

Divinity, teaching, law, all had been tried, and all had been rejected. What was he to do? His unlimited energy sought in vain for an object on which to exercise itself (4). He had no profession and no belief.

(1) We are not alone to attribute Carlyle's doubts to the reading of Gibbon. Froude, the ablest and best informed of Carlyle's biographers says (Vol. I, p. 54): « The 'grave prohibitive doubts' which had risen in him of their own accord (?) had been strengthened by Gibbon, whom he found in Irving's library and eagerly devoured ». Some pages before, Froude says that Carlyle was reading Hume's essays. Is it not possible that Hume did for Carlyle that he did for Kant?... The example of great minds, made known to Carlyle by their works, confirmed his opinion, if it did nothing more. « Carlyle's wide study of modern literature had shown him that much of this (his former belief) had appeared to many of the strongest minds of Europe to be doubtful or even plainly incredible » Froude, Vol. I, p. 67.

(2) « You announce that you are rather quitting philosophy and theology. I predict that you will quit them more and more. I give it you as my decided prognosis that the two provinces in question are become Theorem, brain-web and shadow, wherein no earnest soul can find solidity for itself » (*Letter to John Sterling*, quoted by Froude, Vol. III, p. 115, under date of June 7, 1837).

(3) *Reminiscences*.

(4) As already noticed in our preface, Carlyle's works are full of himself. Many are the passages which a biographer can apply directly to their author.

To add to these misfortunes, his health gave way under the strain of forced work. Henceforth his melancholy is of a darker hue (1).

A certain love affair, in which the object of his affections was offered and then snatched away, left him in Sorrows like those of Werter. The apparition of that god-like creature had dispelled the clouds for a moment, but only for a moment. With her, went the last ray of hope. A physical and moral wreck, such had he become to be. The awful crisis of this period is fully described in *Sartor Resartus*. « Doubt had darkened into unbelief... Is there no God then; but at best an absentee God, sitting idle (2), ever since the first Sabbath, at the outside of His Universe *seeing* it go? Has the word Duty no meaning?... What, in these unimaginative days, are the terrors of conscience to the diseases of the liver! Not on Morality but on Cookery let us build our stronghold; there, brandishing our frying pan, as censor, let us offer sweet incense to the Devil and live at ease on the fat things *he* has provided for his Elect » (3).

To such lengths had the spirit of Inquiry carried him. What could he do? Would he yield to the temptation and seek happiness in sensual enjoyment? « Under such corroding and continual vexations, an ordinary spirit would have sunk at length, would have gradually given up its loftier aspirations, and sought refuge in vicious indulgence » (4). But Carlyle was no ordinary character and did not act as one. He had

Here is one: « At the fervid period when his whole nature cries aloud for Action, there is nothing sacred under whose banner he can act ». To which compare the following: « It is a shame and misery to me at this age to be gliding about in *strenuous* idleness, with no hand in the game of life where I have yet so much to win, no outlet for the restless faculties which are thus up in mutiny and slaying one another for lack of fair enemies. I must do or die then, as the song goes » (*Letter to John Carlyle*. March. 9, 1821), Froude, Vol. I, p. 99.

(1) « My curse seems deeper and blacker than that of any man: to be immured in a rotten carcase, every avenue of which is changed into an inlet of pain, till my intellect is *obscured* and *weakened*, and my head and heart are alike desolate and dark » (*Journal*, Last Day of, 1823).

(2) In early life, Carlyle seems to have doubted about the existence of Providence. « What is this world then, what is this human life, over which a just God *is said* to preside, but of whose presence or whose providence so few signs are visible? » (Froude, Vol. I, p. 66). The advance of science tending towards Atheism made Carlyle uneasy. « He was perplexed by the indifference with which the Supreme Power was allowing its existence to be obscured » (Froude, Vol. IV, p. 280). Cf. also Froude, Vol. I, p. 68. In his *Journal* for Sept. 7, 1829, we find this; « The 'course of Providence' (say, sometimes I almost feel that there *is* such a thing even for *me*) seems guiding my steps into new regions ».

(3) *Sartor Resartus*, Bk. II, Ch. 7, p. 99.

(4) *Life of Schiller*, p. 12.

too much force of will to yield. He entered his protest in the « Everlasting No ». « I am not thine (the Devil's) but free and forever hate thee », and he shook from him base fear. « What art thou afraid of? Despicable biped? What is the sum total of the worse that lies before thee? Death? Well, Death; and say the pangs of Tophet too, and all that the Devil and Man may, will or can do against thee! Hast thou a heart; Canst thou not suffer whatso it be and as a child of Freedom, though outcast, trample Tophet itself under thy feet while it consumes thee? Let it come then; I will meet it and defy it » (1). Thus by a supreme act of the will did he determine not to surrender, but to fight, if not victory, at least towards it.

III.

The storm past, Carlyle says, looking back at this period, « Hast not thy Life been that of most sufficient men thou hast seen in this generation? An outflush of foolish young Enthusiasm, like the first fallow-crop, wherein are as many weeds as valuable herbs; this all parched away under the Droughts of practical and spiritual Unbelief, as Disappointment in thought and act, often-repeated gave rise to Doubt and Doubt gradually settled into Denial. If I have had a second-crop and now see the perennial green sward and sit under umbrageous cedars which defy all Drought (and Doubt); herein too, be the Heavens praised, I am not without examples and even exemplars » (2). To whom does he refer here? We have not far to seek. In one of his earliest letters to *Goethe* he writes; « If I have been delivered from darkness into any measure of light, if I know aught of myself and my duties and destination, it is to the study of your writings more than to any other circumstance that I owe this. » Again: « I was once an unbeliever, not in religion only, but in all the mercy and beauty of which it is the symbol, storm tossed in my imaginations; a man divided from men, exasperated, wretched, driven almost to despair. But now thank Heaven, all this is altered, solely by the new light which rose upon me, I attained to new thoughts and a composure which I should once have considered as impossible ».

What was that doctrine of Goethe's which worked so radical a change in Carlyle? which opened to him « a new Heaven and a new Earth »?

Able critics who have studied Goethe's works and who understand his philosophy of life, assure us that Carlyle grasped but one aspect of

(1) « I am well nigh *done*, I think. To die is hard enough at this age. To die by inches is very hard. But I *will* not. Though all things human and divine are against me, I will not » (Fragment of a Diary by Carlyle at Kinnaird. Cf. Froude, Vol. I, p. 204 - *Sartor Resartus*, p. 103).

(2) *Sartor Resartus*, Ch. 9, p. 113.

his master's doctrine (1), and that aspect he has metamorphosed with his own theories, and erected into a new doctrine, not unlike Goethe's, yet not identical with it.

Annihilation of self (2), he considers to be the foundation, the preliminary moral act which serves as a solid basis for his superstructure. And this first stage he tells us in the « Everlasting Yea » has been happily passed in his own case. « Fly then, false shadows of Hope: I will chase you no more. I will believe you no more. And ye too, haggard spectres of Fear, I care not for you; ye too are all shadows and a lie. Let me rest here, were it but to die: to die or to live is alike to me; alike insignificant » (3). He renounces pleasure and by the very fact casts out fear which arises from an apprehension of impending evil, as opposed to happiness. Death itself has become indifferent to him. Accepting this greatest of all physical evils, with perfect equanimity of mind, no minor evils, which fall short of death, have any power over him.

No longer self-centered, nor self-seeking, he can cast a look around on the *non ego*. Nature first catches his eye and her he places on the throne of the personal God whom he has deposed by unbelief. « O Nature, why do I not name thee God », he exclaims. « Art thou not the Living garment of God? » O Heavens, is it, in very deed, He then, that ever speaks through thee; that lives and loves in thee, that lives and loves in me? » (4).

Man next claims his attention. « Poor, wandering, wayward man! Art thou not tried and beaten with stripes even as I am?... Man, with his so mad Wants and so mean Endeavours, had become the dearer to me; and even for his sufferings and his sins, I now first named him Brother. Thus was I standing in the porch of that *Sanctuary of Sorrow*, by strange steep ways had I too been guided thither; and ere long its sacred gates would open, and the *Divine Depth of Sorrow* (5) lie disclosed to me » (6).

The fact that *Evil* existed in the world puzzled him. Whence did it come? How was it to be overcome? In clearest terms does he propose

(1) Cf. Cazamian, op. cit., pp. 47, 69.

(2) « Great is self-denial! Practise it where thou needest it. Life goes all to ravel and tatters where that enters not. The monks meant very wisely: hit thou the just medium ». (*Journal*, Aug. 8, 1832).

(3) *Sartor Resartus*, Bk. II, Ch. 9, p. 113.

(4) *Ibid.*, p. 115.

(5) « *Devoutness of submission* (wherein lies what the man calls the *Divine Depth of Sorrow*) », is a phrase from one of Carlyle's letters (*To his Wife*, Aug. 8, 1836) which may help us to understand his meaning.

(6) *Sartor Resartus*, Bk. II, Ch. 9, p. 115.

the question and proceed to solve it. « A vain interminable controversy », writes he, « touching what is at present called *Origin of Evil*, arises in every soul since the beginning of the world; and in every soul that would pass from idle suffering into actual Endeavouring must first be put an end to. The most, in our time, have to go content with a simple incomplete-enough Suppression of this controversy; to a few some Solution of it is indispensable » (1). And Carlyle as one of the « few » offers us the following elucidation on the subject.

« Man's Unhappiness, as I construe it, comes of his Greatness; it is because there is an infinite in him (2), which with all his cunning he cannot quite bury under the Finite. Will the whole Finance Ministers and Upholsterers and Confectioners of modern Europe undertake, in joint company, to make one Shoebblack happy? They cannot accomplish it above an hour or two; for the Shoebblack also has a Soul quite other than his stomach; and would require, if you consider it, for his permanent satisfaction and saturation, simply this allotment, no more, and no less: *God's infinite Universe all to himself*, therein to enjoy infinitely and fill every wish as fast as it rose... Try him with half a Universe, of an Omnipotence; he sets to quarrelling with the proprietor of the other half and declares himself the most maltreated of men » (3).

And he continues; « The whim we have of Happiness is somewhat thus. By certain valuations and averages, of our own striking, we come upon some sort of average terrestrial lot; this we fancy belongs to us by nature, and of indefeasible right. It is simple payment of our wages, of our deserts; requires neither thanks nor complaint; only such *overplus* as there may be do we account Happiness; any *deficit* again is Misery. Now consider that we have the valuation of our own deserts ourselves, and what a fund of Self - conceit there is in each of us, — do you wonder that the balance should so often dip the wrong way, and make a blockhead cry: See there, what a payment; was ever worthy gentleman so used! — I tell thee, Blockhead, it all comes of thy Vanity; of what thou *fanciest* those same deserts of thine to be. Fancy that thou deservest to be hanged (as is most likely), thou wilt feel it happiness to be only shot: fancy that thou deservest to be hanged in a hair-halter, it will be a luxury to die in hemp » (4).

(1) *Sartor Resartus*, Bk. II, Ch. 9, p. 116.

(2) « Why do we fret and murmur; and toil and consume ourselves for objects so transient and frail? Is it that the soul living there as in her prison-house strives after something boundless like herself, and finding it nowhere still renews the search? Surely we are fearfully and wonderfully made » (*Letter to his Mother*, Jan. 30, 1821).

(3) *Sartor Resartus*, Bk. II, Ch. 9, p. 116.

(4) *Sartor Resartus*, Bk. II, Ch. 9, pp. 116-117.

Setting aside an Infinite God capable of satisfying the infinite desires of the human heart, how does Carlyle work out the problem? How is the human heart to attain its object, which he grants to be infinite? Here is his solution: *The Fraction of Life can be increased in value, not so much by increasing your Numerator as by lessening your Denominator.* Nay, unless my Algebra deceives me, *Unity* itself divided by *Zero* will give *Infinity*. Make thy claim of wages a zero, then; thou hast the world under thy feet. Well did the Wisest (1) of our time write: « It is only with Renunciation that Life, properly speaking, can be said to begin » (2).

He frankly confesses that the misery of his youth which had its climax in his late crisis, was the result of this one fact, namely that he was not happy. And he asks himself what right he had to be happy. « What Act of Legislature was there that *thou* shouldst be Happy? A little while ago thou hadst no right to *be* at all. What if thou wert born and predestined not to be Happy but to be Unhappy! Art thou nothing other than a Vulture, then, that fliest through the Universe seeking after somewhat to *eat*; and shrieking dolefully because carrion enough is not given thee? Close thy *Byron*; open thy *Goethe* » (3).

Lord Byron's cry « I am not happy » is thus silenced with indignation. « There is in man a Higher than love of Happiness: he can do without Happiness and instead thereof find Blessedness... Love not Pleasure, love God », and prove the truth of your love by doing that duty which lie nearest thee. « This is the « Everlasting Yea » wherein all contradiction is solved; wherein whoso walks and works, it is well with him » (4).

Zeno taught his disciples to trample the earth with its injuries under their feet. Christ, according to Carlyle, taught his disciples to *love* the earth even while it injures them, and thus was inaugurated the *Worship of Sorrow* whose temple « now lies in ruins, overgrown with jungle, the habitation of doleful creatures » (5). This is the Godlike in man the *love* of sorrow. « This is Belief; all else is Opinion » (5)... « We have here not a Whole Duty of Man, yet a Half Duty, namely the Passive half: could we but do it as we can demonstrate it (6).

« As we can demonstrate it ». Carlyle feels that his demonstration is irrefragable. We shall leave him to his conceit for the present, and continue to let him expose in his own words the other « Half Duty »

(1) Goethe.

(2) *Sartor Resartus*, Bk. II, ch. 9, p. 117.

(3) *Ibid.*

(4) *Sartor Resartus*, Bk. II, Ch. 9, p. 117.

(5) *Ibid.*, p. 118.

(6) *Ibid.*, p. 119.

of man, namely the Active, lest in our presentation, we should falsify or in any way alter the Prophet's exact meaning.

« Indeed Conviction, were it ever so excellent, is worthless till it convert itself into conduct. Nay properly Conviction is not possible till then; inasmuch as all Speculation is by nature endless, formless, a vortex amid vortices: only by a felt indubitable certainty of Experience does it find any center to revolve round, and so fashion itself into a system. Most true is it, as a wise man (1) teaches us, that 'Doubt of any sort cannot be removed except by Action'. On which ground, too, let him who gropes painfully in darkness or uncertain light, and prays vehemently that the dawn may ripen into day, lay this other precept well to heart, which to me was of invaluable service: '*Do that Duty which lies nearest thee*'. Thy second Duty will already have become clearer » (2).

To those who, dissatisfied with their present lot and led on by false hope, think they can succeed better elsewhere, Carlyle says: « Your America is here or nowhere. The situation that has not its Duty, its Ideal, was never yet occupied by man. Yes, here, in this poor, miserable, hampered, despicable Actual, wherein thou even now standest, here or nowhere is thy Ideal: work it out therefrom; and working, believe, live, be free » (3). And he ends the chapter thus: « I too could now say to myself: Be no longer a Chaos, but a world or even World-kin. Produce! Produce! were it but the pitifullest infinitesimal fraction of a product, produce it in God's name!' 'Tis the utmost thou hast in thee: out with it then. Up! Up! Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy whole might. Work while it is called Today, for the Night cometh, wherein no man can work » (4).

IV.

We have seen what difficulty Carlyle had in finding his avocation. Divinity, teaching, law, literature these had claimed his attention for a time. Not yet satisfied, he was thinking seriously of going to America, the fabled land of riches, prosperity, success. But just then, there came a warning voice from Germany: « Your Ideal, your America is your Actual Position. There work! Be up and doing! Produce!! » To this advice of his new spiritual Director, Carlyle lent a docile ear. Determined to do his best, he set to work forthwith.

(1) Goethe again.

(2) *Sartor Resartus*, Bk. II, Ch. 9, p. 119.

(3) *Sartor Resartus*, Bk. II, Ch. 9, p. 119.

(4) *Ibid.*, p. 120.

His actual position at the time was that of a man of letters. Such he resolved to continue and such he persevered manfully till death, despite trying circumstances. Some of these show Carlyle to have been a man of superior will. No difficulty was too great to be overcome, no sacrifice too dear to be paid. He had an end in view and that end he attained by untiring energy, buoyed up by an indomitable will.

The first example we wish to give belongs to a period already touched upon, namely the years of university life. Engaged simultaneously in studying law, in reading, in composing articles, in teaching mathematics, Carlyle overestimated his physical strength and succumbed to sickness. But not even this checked him in his onward course. He spared nothing and nobody, least of all himself, provided he achieved his end. «What's the use of health or of life, if not to do some work therewith? And what work nobler than transplanting foreign Thought into barren domestic soil; except indeed planting Thought of your own, which the fewest are privileged to do?» (1) Carlyle was to do both. We all know how he transplanted German Thought into England; but his own thoughts interest us far more as revealing the man.

The sixteen articles, which Carlyle wrote for the Edinburgh Encyclopedia and which were his first gift to the world, are «characterised by marks of great industry» (2). Carlyle was a prodigious reader. For one essay on Diderot he read all that author's works, twenty five volumes, a volume a day. The twelve volumes of Gibbon were «devoured» in as many days. Goethe bore witness to Carlyle's extensive readings in German when he said: «He knows our literature better than we do ourselves».

A voracious consumer, Carlyle was no less a prolific producer. His works, — those he authorised for republication, — fill some thirty volumes. Of these, some caused him but little work, while the majority are «red with his heart's blood». «Past and Present» was written off in seven weeks, a «tour de force» which has been compared to Johnson's production of «Rasselas».

The gathering together of materials for the «Life of Cromwell» took «four years of abstruse toil, obscure speculation, futile wrestling and misery» (3).

His History of Friedrich the Great «required, received and well-nigh exhausted all his strength». At first the magnitude of the projected task frightened him. «Dare I do it? Dare I not?» he asked himself. At length he decided in the affirmative. The work took him thirteen years

(1) *Sartor Resartus*, Bk. I, Ch. 11, p. 48.

(2) J. Nichol, op. cit., p. 26, footnote.

(3) B. W. Matz, op. cit., p. 33.

of « martyrdom » as he tells us. He journeyed twice to Germany, collecting manuscripts and visiting battle fields (1). The first two volumes being published, the remainder lay on him like a nightmare. « A task that I cannot do, that generally seems not worth doing and that yet must be done. No job approaching it in ugliness was ever cut out for me; nor had I any motive to go on, except the sad negative one, shall we be beaten in our old days? »

The following incident will perhaps manifest more clearly the wonderful will-power of Carlyle. It regards his French Revolution. « I write my book », he said (2) « without hope of it, except of being done with it ». « Little did he know what was in store for him. Having once written, he had unfortunately, not « done with it ». The first volume, when complete, was lent by Carlyle to Mill (who had so generously allowed the use of all his books on the subject); and Mill, without permission, lent it again to Mrs. Taylor. Carlyle never saw a sheet of it again, for, by the carelessness of Mrs. Taylor's servant, the MS., all but a sheet or two was burned. This was the greatest calamity that could have happened to Carlyle at this his most trying and struggling period. He had hoped to turn the tide with this great effort of his. The magnitude of the disaster is apparent when one knows how hard and terrible to him was the work of writing, added to the fact that he had kept no notes and could not remember a single sentence. Mill offered £200 by way of compensation, but Carlyle accepted half that amount, as bare wages for the time spent on it, and this only in fear of offending his friend. He recoiled from the task of rewriting the volume for weeks, fearing the perfection of the lost manuscript could not be reached. At last he started (encouraged by the sight of a bricklayer building a house, brick by brick), and continued at times almost in despair, until at last, on September 22nd., 1835, about seven months after the catastrophe, the volume was recreated. « On the whole », he wrote his brother John, « I feel like a man who had nearly killed himself in accomplishing zero » (3). Whatever we may think of his *History* as such, we cannot but admire the manner in which it was written or rather rewritten, and the noble sentiments displayed on the occasion (4).

(1) Mrs. Carlyle calls *Friederich the Great* « That tremendous book. Tremendous indeed, and involving an amount of reading and investigation that to a less-determined man would have been insuperable, and we can understand his feeling doubtful whether he would finish the book, or the book him » (Percy Warner, op. cit. p. 46).

(2) *Letter to his Brother John*, Jan. 12, 1835.

(3) B. W. Matz, op. cit., p. 24, and *Letter to John Carlyle*, Sept., 23, 1835.

(4) Although crushed by the misfortune, he strove to console Mill (John Stuart) who was « terribly cut up » about the matter.

We have hitherto adduced examples from Carlyle's life as a writer. We could likewise pass in review his private and domestic life and point out striking instances of that same primacy of the will over heart and intellect (1) We shall, however, refrain from doing so at present, as the following chapter will, we believe, bear out more fully the truth of our conclusion, namely that Carlyle is in very deed an Activist.

CHAPTER III.

Thomas Carlyle an Activist as shown by his Writings.

« If new-got gold is said to burn the pockets till it be cast forth into circulation, much more may new Truth » (2). Carlyle, having found what he considered a new theory of life, immediately set about preaching his new gospel, for « man is emphatically a Proselytising creature » (3). Unfortunately for us however, he gave no direct sermon on the subject, but by patient effort we hope to extract enough of the doctrine from his united works, to convince our readers that the label we have prepared for Carlyle will really stick.

I.

Manifold are the passages which reveal to us Carlyle the Activist. It was while trying to solve the « problem of life » that Carlyle hit upon Activism, for which reason, we too take that problem as the starting point of our exposition. « Who am I? Whence? How? Whereto? — The answer lies around written in Nature: but where is the cunning eye and ear to whom that God-written Apocalypse will yield articulate

(1) While not signaling out any incident in particular, Cazamian (op. cit., p. 256) says that Carlyle's private life was in a large measure conformable to his public teaching, at least as far as regards Activism. His own words are: « Il est instructif et salulaire d'apercevoir chez Carlyle même, et à son foyer, les premiers fruits de sa doctrine: une vie — la sienne — soutenue, fortifiée pour l'action, pour l'action sans trêve, pour le recommencement quotidien de l'effort; une preuve éclatante de la salubrité de ce pain amer ». And any one who will take the pains to read Froude's four volumes on Carlyle will have no difficulty in endorsing Cazamian's opinion.

(2) *Sartor Resartus*, Bk. I, Ch. 2, p. 5.

(3) *Ibid.*, p. 5.

meaning?» (1) Our Prophet has been thus highly favored and with generous unselfishness he hastens to impart his invaluable life-giving knowledge to others (2).

(1) *Ibid.*, Bk. I, Ch. 8, p. 31.

(2) Among those to whom Carlyle taught his new doctrine, we may mention Miss Jane Welsh (his future wife) and his brother John. We have a letter written to this latter while at Rome, which we shall quote in full as it gives no little authentic knowledge about Carlyle himself. It is as follows: *To John Carlyle*. Feb. 26, 1832. « Your last letter seemed to me the best I had ever got from you — perhaps among the best I had ever got from anyone. There is so much heartiness and earnestness; the image of a mind honestly, deeply labouring, in a healthy genuine position towards nature and men. Continue in that right mood; strive unweariedly, and all that is yet wanting will be given you. Go on and prosper. *Klarheit, Reinheit, 'Im Ganzen, Guten, Wahren resolut zu leben'*. Well do I understand, my dear brother, those of old « the one thing needful ».— Well do I understand, my dear brother, those thoughts of yours on the Pincian Hill (1) They tore my inward man in pieces for long years, and literally well-nigh put an end to my life, till by Heaven's great grace I got the victory over them — nay, changed them into precious everlasting possessions. I wish you could have read my book (2) at this time, for it turns precisely (in its way) on these very matters; in the paper « Characteristics » also, some of my latest experiences and insights are recorded; these I still hope you will soon see. Meanwhile be not for a moment discouraged; for the victory is *certain* if you desire it honestly; neither imagine that it is by forgetting such high questions that you are to have them answered. Unless one is an animal *they cannot be forgotten*. This also however is true, that logic will never resolve such things; the instinct of logic is *to say No*. Remember always that the deepest truth, the truest of all, is actually 'unspeakable', cannot be argued of, dwells far below the indubitable direct experience, then it is known once and forever. I wish I could have speech of you from time to time; perhaps I might disentangle some things for you. Yet after all they victory must be gained by *oneself*. '*Dir auch gelingh es Dich durchzuarbeiten*'. I will here only mention a practical maxim or two which I have found of chief advantage. First I would have you know this: '*doubt* of any sort can only be removed by *action*'. But what to act on? You cry. I answer again in the words of Goethe: '*Do the duty which lies nearest*'; do it (not merely pretend to have done it); the next duty will already have become clear to thee. There is a great truth here; in fact it is my opinion that he who (by whatever means) has ever seen into the *infinite* nature of duty has seen all that costs difficulty. The universe has then become a temple for him, and the divinity and all the divine things thereof will infallibly become revealed. To the same purport is this saying *die hohe Bedeutung des Entsagens*, once understood *entsagen* then life *eigentlich beginnt*. You may also meditate on these words: 'the divine depth of sorrow', 'the sanctuary of sorrow'. To me they have been full of significance. But on the whole, dear brother study to clear your heart from all selfish *desire*, that *freewill* may arise and reign absolute in you. True vision lies in thy *heart*; it is by this that the *eye* sees, or forever only fancies that it sees. Do the duty that lies there clear at hand... »

(1) « Relating to religious difficulties of the usual kind » says Froude. Vol. II, p. 267.

(2) *Sartor Resartus* (not then printed).

The Universe is a symbol of God. God is Force (1). Force is everywhere. «Man is a revelation to sense of the mystic god-given force that is in him». This inward force urges him to action. «In all the sports of Children, were it only in their wanton breakages and defacements, you shall discern a creative instinct: the Mankin feels that his vocation is to work» (2).

«For the first few years of our terrestrial Apprenticeship, we have not much work to do; but, boarded and lodged gratis, are set down modestly to look about us over the workshop, and see others work, till we have understood the tools a little, and can handle this and that» (3). But good passivity alone does not suffice. Activity is as necessary to man, as food is to hunger. Man must be active. «The end of man is an action» (4).

Carlyle makes *Work* man's whole duty (5). He is very explicit on the point. «Gradually see what kind of work you individually can do:» he advises the students of Edinburgh, «it is the first of all problems for a man to find out what kind of work he is to do in this universe». «For this is the thing a man is born to, in all epochs. *He is born to expend every particle of strength that God Almighty has given him, in doing the work* he finds he is fit for; to stand up to it to the last breath of life, and do his best. We are called upon to do that; — and the reward we all get, — which we are perfectly sure of, if we have merited it, — is that we have tried to do the work. For that is a

(1) Cf. *Sartor Resartus*. Bk. I, Ch. 11, pp. 42-43, and *Heroes*. Lecture I, pp. 190-191. Consider also the following lines which Goethe puts in the mouth of Faust. They are taken from the scene in the Study.

«'Tis written — «IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD».
Already at a stand — and how proceed?
Who helps me? Is the Word to have such value?
Impossible — if by the spirit guided.
Once more — «IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE THOUGHT» —
Consider the first line attentively,
Lest hurrying on the pen outrun the meaning.
Is it *THOUGHT* that works in all, and that makes all?
— It should stand rather thus — «IN THE BEGINNING
WAS THE POWER» — yet even as I am writing this
A something warns me we cannot rest there.
The spirit aids me — all is clear — and boldly
I write, IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE *ACT*».
«... Im Anfang war die That» (line 1237).

(2) *Sartor Resartus*. Bk. II, Ch. 2, p. 56.

(3) *Ibid.*, p. 60.

(4) *Ibid.*, Ch. 6, p. 96.

(5) Cf. *Sartor Resartus*. Bk. II, Ch. 4, p. 79.

great blessing in itself; and I should say, there is not very much more reward than that going in this world » (1).

More explicit still is the following: « This is the everlasting duty of all men, black or white, who are born into the world. *To do competent work*, to labour honestly according to the ability given them; for that and for no other purpose was each of us sent into this world (2)... Whatsoever prohibits or prevents a man from this his sacred appointment to labor while he lives on earth — that, I say, is the man's deadliest enemy (3)... Yes, this is the eternal law of Nature for a man; this, that he shall be permitted, encouraged, and if need be compelled to do what work the Maker of him has intended by the making of him for this world » (4).

Rather severe towards the « Black Gentleman », what has Carlyle to say about our well-to-do white man? May he not live in ease and enjoyment? Is he too obliged to work?... Yes, all mankind without exception has to work. Such is Nature's law and she must be obeyed. « Any poor idle Black man, any idle White man, *rich or poor*, is a mere eye sorrow to the State... The State is taking measures to get its rich white man set to work; for alas, they also have long sat Negro-like up to ears in pumpkin, regardless of « work » and of a world all going to waste for their idleness » (5).

Judging the relative worth of the uneducated Worker and the cultured Idler, Carlyle decides in favor of the former. No matter how uneducated a man might be, provided he work, there is hope for him. « To work! What incalculable sources of cultivation lie in that process, in that attempt; how it lays hold of the whole man, not of a small theoretical calculating fraction of him, but of the whole practical doing and daring and enduring man; thereby to awaken dormant faculties, root out old errors, at every step! He that has done nothing has known nothing. Vain it is to sit scheming and plausibly discoursing: up and be doing! If thy knowledge be real, put it forth from thee: grapple with

(1) *Inaugural Address* as Lord Rector, p. 146 and p. 168.

(2) *Elsewhere*: « Man may doubt as he will, but the great fact remains: *He is here*, and 'not to ask questions, but to work' (*Letter to John Carlyle*, August. 31, 1832).

(3) Thus « thought » may become « man's deadliest enemy ». « My dearest partner, endeavor to still all feelings that can end in no action » (*Letter to his Wife...* on the death of her Mother. Mar. 11, 1842). And again: « There is just one man unhappy: he who is possessed by some idea which he cannot convert into action, or still more which restrains or withdraws him from action. Goethe ». *Diary*, Dec. 7, 1826.

(4) *Occasional Discourse on the Nigger Question*, pp. 6-7.

(5) *Occasional Discourse on the Nigger Question*. (prefixed to the *Latter-day Pamphlets*, p. 24).

real Nature; try thy theories there, and see how they hold out. *Do one thing, for the first time in thy life do a thing; a new light will rise to thee on the doing of all things whatsoever. Truly a boundless significance lies in work; whereby the humblest craftsman comes to attain much, which is of indispensable use, but which he who is of no craft, were he never so high, runs the risk of missing* » (1).

« Idleness alone is without hope: work earnestly at anything, you will by degrees learn to work at almost all things. There is endless hope in work, were it even work at making money » (2). Work, strive, produce! But what if we do not succeed in our work?... « If we do not succeed where is the use of us? We had better never have been born » (3).

Man has to work. Of this necessity, Carlyle wishes us to make a Duty, and in the accomplishment of that Duty he assures us we shall find happiness or the more real, but less expressible beatitude. We are all girt, he says, with a ring of Necessity. « Happy he for whom a kind heavenly Sun brightens it into a ring of Duty! » (4) And again, « Manhood begins when we have in any way made truce with Necessity; begins even when we have surrendered to Necessity, as the most part only do; but begins joyfully and hopefully only when we have reconciled ourselves to Necessity; and thus in reality, triumphed over it and felt that in Necessity we are free » (5).

Since work is the necessary condition of man's happiness, the idle man alone is bound to be unhappy (6). « The only happiness a brave man ever troubled himself with asking much about was, happiness to get his work done. Not « I can't eat » but « I can't work! » that was the burden of all wise complaining among men. *It is, after all, the one unhappiness of a man. That he cannot work; that he cannot get his destiny as a man fulfilled* » (7).

His destiny, work is also the first law of man's existence here below. « The meaning of life here on earth might be defined as consisting in this: To unfold your *self*, to work what thing you have the faculty for.

(1) *Corn-Law Rhymes*. Essays. Vol. III, p. 162.

(2) *Past and Present*. Bk. III, Ch. 2, p. 185.

(3) *Ibid*, p. 184.

(4) *Sartor Resartus*. Bk. II, Ch. 2, p. 60.

(5) *Essay on Burns*. Essays. Vol. I, p. 223.

(6) Carlyle himself was always *miserable* when idle. « I am happy while I can keep busy, which, alas! is by no means always », he wrote to his Brother Alexander (early in 1823). To express the difficulty with which he wrote his books, he often said ' he wrote with his blood ', and still he could say: « Writing is a dreadful labor, yet not so dreadful as idleness ». (*Journal*, Feb. 1829).

(7) *Past and Present*. Bk. III, Ch. 4, p. 192.

It is a necessity for the human being, *the first law of our existence* » (1). « Work is the mission of man in this Earth. A day will arrive when he who has no work to do will not find it good to show himself in our quarter of the solar system; but may go and look out elsewhere, if there be any *idle Planet* discoverable » (2).

A necessity, a duty, the condition of happiness, work is also a panacea for all evils. « Work is the grand cure of all the maladies and miseries that ever beset mankind — honest work which you intend getting done » (3).

And again « for suffering and enduring there is no remedy but striving and doing » (4).

Pessimist though he was for his own age, Carlyle had some hope for the future. While inveighing vehemently against the evils of his day, he pierced the clouds and caught sight of the God of his choice, enthroned in glory: « Giant *Labour*, truest emblem there is of God the World-Worker. Demiurgus and eternal Maker; noble *Labour* which is yet to be the King of this Earth, and sit on the highest throne, — staggering hitherto like a blind irrational giant, hardly allowed to have his common place on the street-pavements; idle Dilettantism, Dead-Sea Apism crying out, « Down with him, he is dangerous ». Labour must become a seeing rational giant, with a *soul* in the body of him, and take his place on the throne of things, — leaving his Mammonism, and several other adjuncts, on the lower steps of said throne » (5).

Since God is Force, Carlyle readily accepted and acted on the proverb « Laborare est orare » (6) and this is the kind of piety he principally extols in his *Heroes*.

(1) *Heroes and Hero-Worship*. Lecture VI, p. 354.

(2) *Chartism*, p. 14. See this Essay for many reiterations of this same thought.

(3) *Inaugural Address*, p. 148.

(4) *Essay on Burns*. Essays. Vol. I, p. 223.

(5) *Past and Present*. Bk. III, Ch. 6, p. 203.

(6) One Critic says of Carlyle: « All liturgies, creeds, rituals he calls in question, but there is one liturgy, he says, which does remain forever unpraying exceptionable that of praying by working, *Laborare est orare*, as the old monks said ». (Percy Warner, op. cit. p. 63). And Carlyle says himself. (*Heroes*. Lecture V, p. 307). « All true working is of the nature of worship ». « One should actually, as Irving advises, « pray to the Lord », did one but know how to do it. The *best worship*, however is *stout working*. *Frisch zu!* » (*Letter to his Wife*, Sept. 11, 1831). It is his very definition of prayer. « Prayer is the turning of one's soul, in heroic reverence, in infinite desire and *endeavour* towards the Highest ». (Cf. Froude. Vol. II, p. 21). And again: « For myself, I feel daily more and more what a truth there is in that old saying of the monks *Laborare est Orare* ». (*Letter to Thomas Erskine*, Esq. Oct. 22, 1842).

II.

What is more natural than that Carlyle should honor those men whose lives were in conformity with his teaching! His theory on Heroes and Hero-Worship and the choice of models set up for our admiration and imitation show clearly his mind on the subject. This is a theme on which he recurred incessantly. His Heroes are the object of his reverence (1). Speaking in general, he tells us whom he honors: « Two men I honor, and no third. First the toil worn Craftsman that with earth-made Impliment laboriously conquers the Earth and makes her man's. Venerable to me is the hard hand; crooked, coarse; wherein notwithstanding lies a cunning virtue, indefeasibly royal, as of the Sceptre of this Planet. Venerable too is the rugged face, all weather-tanned, besoiled, with its rude intelligence; for it is the face of a Man living man-like. Oh, but the more venerable for thy rudeness and even because we must pity as well as love thee! Hardly-entreated Brother! For us was thy back so bent, for us were thy straight limbs, and fingers so deformed; thou wert our Conscript on whom the lot fell, and fighting our battles wert so marred. For in thee too, lay a god-created Form, but it was not to be unfolded; encrusted must it stand with the thick adhesions and defacements of Labour: and thy body, like thy soul was not to know freedom. Yet toil on, toil on: *thou* art in thy duty, be out of it who may; thou toilest for the altogether indispensable, for daily bread » (2).

The second man on whom Carlyle bestows praise is the Inspired Thinker who tells us what we are to do, who feeds us with spiritual food even as the humble worker supplies us with bread. In his own estimation, Carlyle belonged to this second class (3).

Such, then, is the first quality Carlyle exacts from him who would become a Hero — namely that he be active, a very great worker. But this does not suffice. *Sincerity*, a deep earnestness in all he says and does, is another « sine-qua-non » characteristic of the Great Man (4). With these two, the Great Man may go ahead and do the work cut out for him. We say « cut out for him », for he does not choose to be great,

(1) « For Great Men I have ever had the warmest predelection ». (*Sartor Resartus*. Bk. II, Ch. 8, p. 108).

(2) *Sartor Resartus*. Bk. III, ch. 4, p. 139.

(3) Cf. *Ibid.* Bk. I, Ch. 10, p. 121.

(4) Activity and Sincerity, we say, are the two fundamental virtues of Carlyle's Heroes. They are both necessary, for according to Carlyle, an insincere man cannot even build a brick house, much less start a religion or found an empire. Still, not every sincere man is great, but no great man can be insincere. Cf. *Heroes*. Lecture II, p. 218 and Lecture IV, p. 279.

but by Nature herself, a noble necessity is laid on him to be genuine, to be great (1). Nature made him and Nature directs him. He has the privilege, nay the obligation to reduce his fellow men to a state of right, to compel them to comply with Nature's laws. This prerogative of the great man may be translated into the well known formula *Might is Right*. That this formula was an article of Carlyle's *Credo* appears to us to be certain (2). We shall adduce several quotations and leave the reader judge for himself.

In Chartism, for instance, we read: « Might and Right do differ frightfully from hour to hour; but give them centuries to try it in, *they are found to be identical* » (3).

« Indeed the rights of man are little worth ascertaining in comparison to the *mights* of man, — to what portion of his rights he has any chance of being able to make good » (4). Man's rights are such as his might can procure and maintain. It is the same with nations as it is with individuals. Wars would be avoided could the contending parties but know their respective mights, for might is right says Carlyle and no man ever fights for what he knows to be wrong. « Clear undeniable right, clear undeniable might; *either* of these once ascertained puts an end to battle » (5).

We find the same asseveration in « Past and Present »: « All fighting, as we noticed long ago, is the dusty conflict of strengths, each thinking itself the strongest or, in other words the justest, — of *Mights* which do in the long-run and forever will in this just Universe in the long-run, mean *Rights*. In conflict the perishable part of them, beaten

(1) Cf. *Heroes*, Lecture V, p. 318.

(2) In connection with this question, we find the following in Froude (Vol. IV, p. 451). « Carlyle was often taunted once, I think, by Mr. Lecky with believing in nothing but the divine right of strength. To me, as I read him, he seems to say, on the contrary, that, as this universe is constructed, it is « Right » only that is strong. He says himself: — ' With respect to that poor heresy of might being the symbol of right, « To a certain great and venerable author ». I shall have to tell Lecky, one day that quite the converse and reverse is the great and venerable author's real opinion namely, that right is the eternal symbol of might: as I hope he, one day descending miles and leagues beyond his present philosophy, will with amazement and real gratification, discover; and that in fact, he probably never met with a son of Adam more contemptuous of might except where it rest on the above origin ' ». Notwithstanding all this, we are inclined to believe that Carlyle really held that *Might is Right* and we base our opinion on the quotations which follow and on numerous other passages. Carlyle never gave any other definition of *Right* than *Force*, *Strength*, and *Might*.

(3) *Chartism*. Ch. 8, p. 44.

(4) *Chartism*. Ch. 5, p. 29.

(5) *Ibid.* Ch. I, p. 7.

sufficiently, flies off into dust: this process ended, appears the imperishable, the true and exact » (1).

The very same doctrine is mentioned in *Heroes*: « The sword will, in the long-run conquer nothing which does not deserve to be conquered. What is better than itself, it cannot put away, but only what is worse. In this great Duel, Nature herself is umpire, and can do no wrong: the thing which is deepest-rooted in Nature, what we call *truest*, that thing and not the other will be found growing at last » (2). And again: « I say sometimes, that all goes by wager-of-battle in this world; that *strength*, well understood is the measure of all worth. Give a thing time; if it can succeed, it is a right thing » (3).

The *Divine Right of Kings* for Carlyle is their divine might. He denies the Scholastic interpretation of the adage, and says that the true *Könning*, King or Able Man *has* a divine right over us (4). Cromwell, for instance, whom Carlyle places far above Napoleon, was the mightiest man of his day and consequently had a right to rule, which he did to Carlyle's entire satisfaction, but not to that of many fair-minded men before and since Carlyle's time. Very similar is the case of Dr. Francia, the renegade Dictator of Paraguay, who showed a great activity in the formation of a new government (5).

Carlyle's notion of property is founded on the same principle. « No property », he says « is eternal but God the Maker's: whom Heaven permits to take possession, his is the right; Heaven's sanction is such permission, — while it last: nothing can be said » (6).

III.

There still remains one element, lacking which, no man, can, in justice, be styled an Activist. As hinted at in our first chapter, the Intellectualist is given rather to speculation. His actions are measured and

(1) *Past and Present*. Bk. III, Ch. 10, p. 219.

(2) *Heroes*. Lecture II, p. 231.

(3) *Ibid*. Lecture IV, p. 292.

(4) *Heroes*. Lecture VI, p. 334.

(5) Francia's faith in *might* is shown by the following passage which Carlyle quotes approvingly: « Being petitioned to provide a new patron saint for one of his new Fortifications, once he made answer: ' O People of Pargauay, how long will you continue idiots? While I was a Catholic, I thought as you do: but I now see *there are no saints but good cannons that will guard our frontiers!* ' » (*Essay on Dr. Francia*, 1843. Essay. Vol. IV, p. 288.

(6) *Chartism*. Ch. 8, p. 45. See also his *Discourse on the Nigger Question* where he says in the clearest terms that land belongs by *Nature* and *Fact* to him who can best cultivate it. If a better man can be found, by war or otherwise he can justly dislodge the actual possessor and take possession.

directed by thought. The Activist, on the contrary, cares but little for abstract truths; with him, action is everything. « To act is easy, to think is hard; to act according to our thought is troublesome », says Goethe (1). and his voice finds a faithful echo in Carlyle's works. This disdain for deliberate thought, for conscious speculation, for logical reasoning, we consider as an essential element of Activism — a negative element, it is true, but as important as positive activity. Now do we find this element in Carlyle? To which does he give the primacy — to the intellect or to the will? In other words, is he a real Activist? To these questions we answer with the following quotations taken from sundry works and which, we believe, show his mind on the subject.

First of all, Carlyle has no love for metaphysics (2). In *Sartor Resartus*, for instance, he deplores their utter barrenness: « Pity that all Metaphysics had hitherto proved so inexpressibly unproductive! The secret of man's Being is still like the Sphinx's secret: a riddle that he cannot ead; and for ignorance of which he suffers death, the worst death, a spiritual. What are your axioms, and Categories, and Systems, and Aphorisms? Words, words. High Air-castles are cunningly built of Words, the Words well bedded also in good Logic-mortar; wherein how-ever, no knowledge will come to lodge » (3).

The Scholastics, he says, never made a bit of headway but kept revolving in a circle: « Consider the old Schoolmen, and their pilgrimage towards truth: the faithfulliest endeavour, incessant unweariet motion, often great natural vigour; only no progress: nothing but antic feats of one limb poised against the other; there they balanced, somersetted and made postures; at best gyrated swiftly, with some pleasure, like Spinning Dervishes, and ended where they began » (4). A little further he has this as regards Alexander of Hales (5): « The Irrefragable Doctor, with his chains of inductions, his corollaries, dilemmas and other cunning logical diagrams and apparatus, will cast you a beautiful horoscope, and speak reasonable things; nevertheless your jewel, which you wanted him to find, is not forthcoming » (6).

(1) *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*. Bk. VII, Ch. 9, p. 60.

(2) « Carlyle has a limited love of abstract truth; of action his love is unlimited ». (John Nichol, *op. cit.* p. 225.

(3) *Sartor Resartus*. Bk. I, Ch. 8, p. 32.

(4) *Characteristics*. Essays. Vol. III, p. 5.

(5) « Alexander of Hales, *Doctor Irrefragabilis*, was born in Gloucester, England. In 1222 he joined the order of St. Francis. In 1231 he was installed as the first Franciscan teacher of theology in the University of Paris. He died in 1245... It was Alexander of Hales who, by the use of the Scholastic method, constructed the first of the great systems of Aristotelian Scholasticism ». (*History of Philosophy*. William Turner. S. T. D., p. 326).

(6) *Characteristics*. Essays. Vol. III, p. 5.

For Logic, «where the truths all stand in a row, each holding by the skirts of the other» (1). Carlyle has not the slightest use (2). All philosophical systems he calls a «dream-theorem; a net quotient, confidently given out, where divisor and dividend are both unknown» (3). Not only do metaphysics and logic fall under his displeasure, but philosophy as a whole. Why «the mere existence and necessity of a philosophy is an evil. Man is sent hither not to question, but to work: 'the end of man', it was long ago written, 'is an Action, not a Thought'» (4). He shows his *profound knowledge* (!) of metaphysics when he writes: «Consider it well, Metaphysics is the attempt of the mind to rise above the mind; to environ, and shut in, or as we say, *comprehend* the mind. Hopeless struggle, for the wisest as for the foolish! What strength of sinew, or athletic skill, will enable the stoutest athlete to fold his own body in his arms, and, by lifting, lift up *himself*? The Irish Saint swam the Channel 'carrying his head in his teeth;' but the feat has never been imitated» (5).

Metaphysics or speculation is built in the air, has no foundation in the reality and no practical value for our mortal life. Wherefore it is absolutely useless (6). «Speculation is by nature endless, formless, a vortex amid vortices; only by a felt indubitable certainty of experience does it find any center to revolve round, and so fashion itself into a system» (7). Speculation does not lead to action but away from it (8). Thought must be shaped into action as man cannot abide by sentiment (9). «Talk, too, that does not end in any kind of action is better suppressed altogether» (10). And the best effect of written thought (a book) is to excite to self-activity (11).

Carlyle loves action. But action is the child of thought (12) Therefore Carlyle cannot be hostile to all thought. No, nor is he. *Speculative* thought alone is insupportable. For the thinking man, the poet, the seer, the writer, he professes the highest reverence. He considers the

(1) *Sartor Resartus*. Bk. I. Ch. 8, p. 31.

(2) Cf. *supra*. Note on page 26.

(3) *Sartor Resartus*, Bk. I, Ch. 8, p. 32.

(4) *Characteristics*. Essays. Vol. III, p. 19.

(5) *Ibid.*, p. 21.

(6) Notice the tendency to Pragmatism.

(7) *Sartor Resartus*. Bk. II, Ch. 9, p. 119.

(8) «For man, there is but one misfortune; when some idea lays hold of him, which exerts no influence upon active life, or still more, which withdraws him from it» (*Wilhelm Meister*. Bk. V, Ch. 16, p. 281).

(9) Cf. *Sartor Resartus*. Bk. II, Ch. 5, p. 89.

(10) *Inaugural Address*, p. 145.

(11) *Sartor Resartus*, Bk. I, Ch. 4, p. 16.

(12) Cf. *Essay on the Death of Goethe*. Essays. Vol. III, p. 107.

« Thinking Man as the worse enemy of the Prince of Darkness » (1), and affirms that true thought cannot die but is handed down through the ages, gathering strength as it goes (2).

True thought, he says, comes not from logic nor by reasoning, but rises almost unbid, from the great region of meditation, which lies « underneath the region of argument and conscious discourse » (3). Thence too, comes everything great, every work of creation. Creation is the result of unconscious meditation. Of conscious reasoning comes only manufacture. « Manufacture is intelligible, but trivial; Creation is great, and cannot be understood » (4).

Such is the principle he enunciates and develops in two remarkable essays viz. *Characteristics* and *Signs of the Times*. Taking as a starting point the physician's aphorism that « the healthy know not of their health but only the sick » he draws this general conclusion that « the sign of health is *unconsciousness* » (5) which conclusion he then applies to morality (6) to poetry, to patriotism, to literature, to eloquence, to everything which proceeds from or is in any way dependent on vital action.

Shakespeare was unconscious of his genius and for that very reason was a healthy poet. « Milton is more conscious of his faculty, which accordingly is an inferior one » (7) No real poet sings because he wishes to, but because he must, because some unconscious thought or other is struggling for utterance (8).

(1) *Sartor Resartus*. Bk. II, Ch. 4, p. 73.

(2) *Heroes*. Lecture I, p. 200.

(3) *Characteristics*. Essays. Vol. III, p. 4.

(4) *Ibid*.

(5) The quotation which follows is categorical enough. « We observe with confidence enough, that the truly strong mind, view it as Intellect, as Morality, or under any other aspect, is nowise the mind acquainted with its strength » (*Characteristics*. Essays. Vol. III, p. 4).

(6) « Of the Wrong we are always conscious, of the Right, never » (*Ibid*. p. 6... quoted from Goethe).

(7) *Characteristics*. Essays. Vol. III, p. 4.

(8) Diametrically opposed to Carlyle on this question of *unconsciousness*, is a modern writer, Oscar Wilde. Where the one affirms, the other denies. Take for example this passage: « All fine imaginative work is *self-conscious* and *deliberate*. No poet sings because he must sing. At least no great poet does. A great poet sings because he chooses to sing » (« Intentions », *The Critic as Artist*, p. 100). Both authors agree on one point, viz. individualism. « It is not the moment that makes the man, but the man who creates the age » (*Ibid.*, p. 101). Again, they differ widely in their opinions regarding Work. We know Carlyle's attitude. Oscar Wilde calls it the « refuge of people who have nothing to do... Its basis is the lack of imagination. It is the last resort of those who know not how to dream » (*Ibid.*, pp. 105-106). We could go on drawing the contrast between these two British Authors — the one an

« The healthy Understanding, we should say, is not the Logical, argumentative, but the Intuitive; for the end of the understanding is not to prove and find reasons, but to know and believe » (1). There he is — the Intuitive. He guesses at conclusions without analysing the terms. This is the unfathomable abyss which separates the Reasoner and the Discoverer. The former « when once confronted with the infinite complexities of the real world will find his little compact theorem wanting » (2).

In the *Sign of the Times*, Carlyle denounces the universal Mechanism of his age, caused by invading consciousness. « Intellect, the power man has of knowing and believing, is now nearly synonymous with Logic, or the mere power of arranging and communicating. Its implement is not meditation, but Argument. « Cause and effect » is almost the only category under which we look at, and work with all Nature » (3). He reminds us that there is a science of *Dynamics* as well as a science of *Mechanics*. Nothing good ever came from Mechanics, he assures us. Science and Art. nay the Christian Religion itself « originated in the Dynamical nature of man, not in his Mechanical nature » (4) « Man's highest attainment was accomplished Dynamically, not Mechanically » (5)

Thus we believe, does Carlyle show his undisguised preference for activity, thus does he establish the primacy of the *will* over the intellect and thus manifest himself an *Activist*.

CHAPTER IV.

The Genesis of Carlyle's Philosophy of Life.

In his essay on *Novalis* (6), Carlyle says: « We reckon it a good maxim that no error is fully confuted till we have seen not only *that* it is an error, but *how* it became one; till finding that it clashes with the principles of truth established in our own mind, we find also in what way it had seemed to harmonize with the principles of truth established

Activist, the other an Apollonian. We wished simply to notice that extremes exist and are actually held by living men. In this way our division of the philosophies of life is freed from artificiality, since such types exist in reality.

(1) *Characteristics*. Essays. Vol. III, p. 4.

(2) Here again the Pragmatist shows his head. Elsewhere: « Profitable Speculation were this: What is to be done; and how is it to be done? »

(3) *Signs of the Times*. Essays. Vol. II, p. 112.

(4) *Ibid.*, p. 108.

(5) *Ibid.*, p. 109.

(6) Essays. Vol. II, p. 59.

in that other mind, perhaps so unspeakably superior to ours ». Although we may accuse Carlyle of acting otherwise in some instances, we agree to treat him according to his wish.

His form of Activism appears to us to be erroneous. We shall strive therefore to show how it « seemed to harmonize with the principles of truth » established in Carlyle's mind, and by so doing, we shall, in some measure, refute the numerous error on which it is founded, and give the reason of our judgement.

I.

In his first Lecture on Heroes, Carlyle tells us that actions come from thoughts, thoughts from feelings and feelings from religion. By religion he means not « the church-creed which a man professes, (nor) the articles of faith which he will sign » but « the thing a man does practically believe (and this is often enough *without* asserting it even to himself, much less to others); the thing a man does practically lay to heart, and know for certain, *concerning his vital relations to this mysterious Universe, and his duty and destiny there*; that is in all cases the *primary thing* for him, and creatively determines all the rest » (1). Be it so! Since there is question of examining how Carlyle came to accept Activism as the true solution of the great problem of life, we must see what was his religion, for religion « creatively determines all the rest ». What was his religion? that's the question. He has been called: Calvinist, Deist, Atheist, Pantheist, and what not? What we know for certain, is that Carlyle *was* a Calvinist in his youth, for such was the form of religion of his parents. But we also know that he later disowned his belief in that or in any other Christian sect. Some say he ceased even to believe in a personal God (2). The immortality of the soul was a matter of doubt for him (3). We have it on the word of Emerson who bases his assertion on a conversation which took place between them (4).

Now if we seek the cause of this loss of religion, many probable reasons may be adduced. We say « probable » reasons, for in such affairs it is well nigh impossible to lay hold of any fact in particular and accuse

(1) *Heroes*. Lecture I, p. 186.

(2) Cf. *St. James' Gazette*, February 11, 1881.

(3) « *English Traits* », p. 10. Also J. Nichol, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

(4) « Carlyle admitted that so far as external evidence went, the being of God was a *supposition inadequately proved*... So again with the soul. There was no proof that it perished with body, but again there as no proof that it did not ». (Froude, Vol. II, p. 375)... « Two infants reasoning in the womb about the nature of this life might be no unhandsome type of two men reasoning here about the life that is to come » (*Diary*. Dec. 3, 1826).

it of being the cause of such an effect. Spiritual death, as a rule, is caused by slow poisoning rather than by a sudden act of violence, and a multitude of little elements usually combine to bring about the unhappy result. An attempt to discover the main factors which led Carlyle from religion to scepticism is now the object of our research.

We have already mentioned the period when the unhappy change took place, namely during his years of university life. Up to that date (1809) we may suppose his belief suffered no perceptible alteration. He believed simply what he had been taught. But a time came — earlier for Carlyle than for most — when he found himself face to face with the « problem of life ». Being naturally of a meditative turn of mind, and being suddenly transferred at an early age from a country town to a large city where he had to confront some of the sterner realities of life, it is not surprising that he encountered the « great question » so early. Confidence in himself led him to seek a personal solution. To obtain some light on the subject, he consulted his familiar teachers — books. Being a divinity student, we might imagine that the recognized authors of the time would satisfy him, but such was not the case. He sought elsewhere. He read and read. Now the danger of such indiscriminate reading is apparent. The youthful mind, not yet well established in truth, is easily led to doubt by objections, by difficulties and sophisms which a more fully equipped intellect would readily detect and solve (1). But reading unaided, errors pass unnoticed. The conclusions follow logically, but are strangely opposed to actual convictions. The opposition is perceived. A struggle follows. What will be the outcome? Will the new data dislodge the old beliefs as no longer tenable? or will the mind, assailed, cling blindly to its old beliefs without testing their truth by the light of reason? or will it sincerely subject to a rational criticism its old tenets and finding them true, cling to them in spite of everything? or proving them false, give them up and have the courage to look elsewhere for truth?... All depends on the one who is giving battle, upon his early

(1) We think Carlyle's mind was *not* prepared for such reading. He had never received an authoritative religious training. His parents had taught him rather by deed than by word of mouth. He respected their belief but later found it unsound for himself. At Annan Academy he got little more as he had already begun his self-education, with what criteria of truth who can say? At the university it was still worse. He says: « Besides all this, we boasted ourselves a *rational university*, in the highest degree hostile to mysticism. Thus was the young vacant mind furnished with much talk about progress of the Species, dark ages, prejudice and the like, so that all were quickly blown out into a state of windy argumentativeness, whereby the better sort had soon to end in sick impotent *scepticism*... The hungry looked up to their spiritual nurses and for food were bidden eat the east wind » (*Sartor Resartus*, Bk. II, Ch. 3, pp. 69-70).

formation, his prejudices, his ability to rise above these, his power of reasoning, his moral rectitude and his sincerity.

How was it in Carlyle's case? He had been brought up in that severe type of Calvinism professed by the Scotch Seceders. The effect it had on his formation was not altogether favorable. He complains that his freedom, even in lawful things, was greatly curtailed. He was forbid much, his active powers were hemmed in, in a word, his «upbringing was too rigorous». He durst not love his father, he tells us in his *Reminiscences*. Now when all this is the fruit of a religion, that religion cannot claim our *love*, though *fear* it, we may. Difficulties were raised against his belief, and being circumstanced as he was, the objections may have seemed and been too true. What then? Not conversion to another sect, for the objector may have offered none or may have suggested the impossibility of ever arriving at truth owing to our supposed imperfect faculties (1). Skepticism is the outcome.

This much for his loss of religion. But that was not all. He tells us clearly in one of his letters to Goethe (2) that he was once an unbeliever in *everything*. In other terms he was a skeptic. We shall take him at his word. But «Scepticism, as sorrowful and hateful as we see it, is not an end but a beginning» (3). He afterwards believed in some thing in Activism. But how did he come to accept this new doctrine, he who had despaired of ever finding truth?

Pursuant to the method advocated by Carlyle and accepted by us in the present case, we shall hazard an explanation which we believe well-founded. Man must believe in something. Belief is a vital necessity (4).

(1) That Carlyle was influenced by Hume and undervalued the powers of reason seems clear from the following passage of a *letter to his mother*. «I firmly trust that the same power which created us with imperfect faculties will pardon the errors of everyone (and none are without them) who seeks truth and righteousness with a simple heart» (March. 29, 1819. Froude. Vol. I, p. 62).

(2) Already quoted above. Cf. Ch. 2, p. 19.

(3) *Heroes*. Lecture V. p. 313.

(4) «Life is for Action», says Newman. «If we insist on proof for everything, we shall never come to action: to act you must assume, and that assumption is faith... I only say that impressions lead to action and that reasonings lead from it. Knowledge of premises and inferences from them, — this is not *to live*. It is very well as a matter of liberal curiosity and of philosophy to analyse our modes of thought: but let this come second and when there is leisure for it and then our examinations will in many ways even be subservient to action». Further he says: «Why are we so constituted that faith, not knowledge or argument is our principle of action, is a question with which I have nothing to do; but I think it is a fact, and, if it be such, we must resign ourselves to it as best we may, unless we take refuge in the

Carlyle himself experienced this during his period of skepticism (1). The human heart is not made to harbour such a guest as *universal unbelief*. If the mind doubts, the heart suffers and bleeds. And Carlyle's heart did bleed. Greater to him than sickness, greater than poverty, greater than all the rest together was his incredulity the source of all his misery. The « life-warmth » had left his heart and because of it his other wounds could not heal (2). He saw the necessity of belief, « life-giving belief » (3). Logic such as he knew, had robbed him of his former faith. He had no more use for it. He would seek elsewhere. He became a pronounced anti-intellectualist. The passages wherein he affirms the impotency of reason as a means to the attainment of truth are numerous. We have already quoted several (4). Rejecting reason, he fell back on faith. He substituted heart for head and feeling for knowledge. This appears in his writings (5).

Man must believe. Seeking what he might believe, Carlyle was directed to Germany where he was assured « he would find what he sought ». Goethe's works fell into his hands and we know the result... Goethe taught that doubt of any kind can be solved by action alone. Seeking a solution of his doubts and an escape from skepticism, Carlyle tried the prescription and found that it worked to his satisfaction. Further experience confirmed his opinion and soon he held it as an article of faith that truth can be attained only through action. A firm believer himself he tried to convert others. Among those who had recourse to Carlyle, was his brother John. To him he writes: « It is by *action* that

intolerable paradox, that the mass of men are created, for nothing, and are meant to leave life as they entered it ». (*Grammar of Assent*, p. 95 or *Discussions and Arguments*, Art. IV).

(1) « Credamus ut vivamus ». (*Journal*. Oct. 5, 1834).

(2) Cf. *Sartor Resartus*. Bk. II, Ch. 7, p. 99.

(3) *Heroes*. Lecture II, p. 242.

(4) Cf. *supra*. Ch. III, pp. 33 et seq.

(5) « Remember always that the deepest truth is actually « unspeakable », cannot be argued of, dwells far below the region of articulate demonstration; *it must be felt by trial and indubitable direct experience*. (*Letter to John Carlyle*. Feb. 16, 1832). To the same he says: « True vision lies in the heart ». (*Ibid.*). And in his *Diary* for Jan. 1827 we find the following interesting passage: « Read Mendelssohn's *Phaedon*, a half translation, half imitation of Plato's *Phaedon*, or last thoughts of Socrates on the immortality of the soul. On the whole a good book — and convincing? *Ay de mi!* These things I fear, are not to be proved but believed; not seized by the understanding, but by faith... For the present I will confess it, I scarcely see how we can reason with absolute certainty on the nature or fate of anything, for it seems to me we only see our perceptions and their reactions; that is to say, our soul sees only its own partial reflex and manner of existing and conceiving »

we learn and attain certainty » (1). For health of *mind* I have the clearest belief that there is no help except in this which I have been inculcating to you: ACTION — religious action. If the mind is cultivated and cannot take in religion by the old vehicle, a new one must be striven after. In this point of view German literature is quite priceless. I never cease to thank Heaven for such men as Richter, Schiller, Goethe. The latter especially was my evangelist » (2). Again he warns him against subtle inquiries which only lead to skepticism: « Do not let yourself into *Grübeln*, even in your present state of partial inaction. I well, infinitely too well, know what *Grübeln* is: a wretched sink of darkness, pain, a paralytic fascination. Cover it up; that is to say, neglect it for some outward piece of action: go resolutely forward, you will not heed the precipices that gape on the right and of you and on the left » (3).

We are not surprised that Carlyle followed Goethe in this doctrine. We find several plausible reasons for the imitation. First of all, Carlyle realized the necessity of faith, of belief in some thing, and was ready to accept anything which could efficaciously relieve him of his mental distress. But in our mind, there is a deeper reason which made him choose Goethe in preference to all others.

It is a psychological fact that ideas, when clothed in beauty of form, are often accepted by the reader as true, solely by reason of their beauty (4). This singular displacement of values — the beautiful for the true — is not at all rational, but very human. Ideas thus accepted may become the basis of subsequent ideas, according to that other law by which new data are admitted as true and introduced into one's mental synthesis, provided they be sympathetic with or at least not opposed to one's actual convictions. Now Goethe's works have an undeniable excellence of form and his ideas were very acceptable to his English pupil. The personality of the master contributed not a little to this effect. In Goethe, Carlyle found a fellow-sufferer. The author of the *Sorrows of Werter* had had his *temptations in the Wilderness*, his period of doubt, but by means of a new doctrine (5), he had arrived at some degree of contentment.

(1) *Letter to John Carlyle*. July 2, 1832.

(2) *Letter to John Carlyle*. Feb. 16, 1832.

(3) *To the Same*. May 22, 1832.

(4) Every idea is accompanied by a concrete image. Now an image is good and pleases when it does not violate the two most fundamental laws of psychology — viz. the laws of contrast and synthesis. To please, a thing must be different from existing things, but not so different that it cannot be incorporated without violence in one's actual mental synthesis.

(5) Activism. Goethe's *Faust* may be interpreted as a glorification of Action. It is to action that the hero finally turns after trying in vain to find

In connection with Activism, Goethe frequently mentions renunciation, but as noticed before Carlyle did not always seize the master's precise meaning, and of this the case in question is an example. Mistaking the «Entsagen» of his pagan master for the «renunciation» which is the basis of Christian asceticism, Carlyle was led to a different conclusion than that intended by the Sage of Weimar (1).

Once in possession of that fundamental principle however, Carlyle set to work to draw his own conclusions. His was an active mind. A single «mother-thought» in his hands became prolific.

It frequently happens to students that during their moments of reflection they come upon what, for them, is an absolutely new idea, or a new explanation of an old difficulty. The discovery is theirs; the new truth becomes part of them. It is their good (2). Is such an idea, such an explanation true? Who will doubt it? Some may, and with reason, but rarely he whose good it is (3). Why, it is part of him and woe to the one who would try to convince him of error! He would be treated with indignation. As we always *find* reasons to justify our conduct, so will he, in all sincerity, *invent* and adduce arguments in favor of his creation. Thus by another misplacement of values — this time, the *good* for the *true*, — man is naturally led to admit as absolutely true, that which he has not subjected to a rational criticism. The emotions of pleasure attendant on such a discovery, take the place of criticism.

happiness in speculation, in base pleasures, in the pursuit of the beautiful, in vain glory. It is by activity, by constant effort — STREBEN — that Faust expiates his numerous sins and is rescued from the clutches of Mephistopheles by angelic hands. Numerous passages justify this interpretation. Cf. especially lines 1,237; 10,188; 11,936; 11,451-2. etc. *Wilhelm Meister* too, contains much the same doctrine.

(1) For Goethe, ENTSAGEN meant the natural limitation of infinite desires and unbounded aspirations — so common to youth — necessary for whoever would engage in fruitful activity. He realised the truth of the old saying: «Non omnia possumus omnes». But the thought of self-denial, the refraining of one's passions etc. was far from him. Carlyle on the contrary, saw in the term the Christian *renunciation* of his old faith. — In connection with «Entsagen», Froude has the following footnote (Vol. II, p. 355): «This word which so often occurs in Carlyle's letters means briefly a resolution fixedly and clearly made to do without the various pleasant things — wealth, promotion, fame, honour and the other prizes with which the world rewards the services which it appreciates», and it is in this sense that Carlyle took it. Renounce these; do your duty without an hope of reward!

(2) For the compliment of a faculty is its good.

(3) The passage between the *good* and the *true* is thus effected. We are strongly inclined to seek our good and keep it when attained. Ideas are the good of the intellect. Now ideas are kept by conviction. But conviction supposes the reality, the truth of the object. And thus to keep our ideas we will find reasons for their truth.

Such, we believe, is the explanation of Carlyle's mental formation. First reduced to skepticism from which he rose by degrees; in the work of reconstruction, an unconscious victim of various laws of psychology, — notably, the *misplacement of values* in its several forms, and the failure to subject to a rational criticism the convictions old and new, which he held — all this, in our mind, accounts for the errors which Carlyle sincerely believed himself and so zealously preached to others.

CHAP. V.

Criticism.

Having offered a plausible explanation of the genesis of Carlyle's doctrine, let us now examine it from a critical point of view. Carlyle started to rebuild his religion, which was « creatively to determine all the rest », by solving the difficult question concerning the Origin of Evil. This was for him the Gordian knot which had been strangling him all along (1). He was to untie it or continue forever in slavery, for everyone who would « pass from idle Suffering into actual endeavouring » (2) must first put an end to that most difficult question.

We know Carlyle's solution. Man's unhappiness comes from his greatness. There is an infinite in him which the whole finite cannot satisfy. What then? How will he obtain the infinite, the object of his desires?... By recourse to his favorite mathematics, Carlyle reminds us that unity divided by zero gives infinity and in this, he says, lies the solution of our difficulty. Decrease your desires to zero, and whatever falls to your lot, no matter how little it may be, will be infinitely above your desires. Renounce happiness and you will find blessedness... As far as we can make out, by Blessedness Carlyle means the natural happiness consequent on the patient bearing of sufferings and trials of all kinds, which he calls the *Worship of Sorrow*. This worship of sorrow, he says, was inaugurated by Christ (3). Renounce pleasure, accept sorrow, embrace it, nay love it, worship it. Doing this, live and be free (4).

(1) *Sartor Resartus*. Bk. II, Ch. 9.

(2) Cf. *supra*. Ch. II, p. 19.

(3) *Sartor Resartus*. Bk. II, Ch. 9, p. 118.

(4) See what Oscar Wilde — the British author we are contrasting with Carlyle — has to say on this point which is fundamental in Carlyle's doctrine. « Self-denial is simply a method by which man arrests his progress, and self-sacrifice is a survival of the mutilation of the savage, part of that old *worship*

In solving the difficulty that beset him, it seems to us Carlyle has had recourse to a most illogical method. Finding that the equation cannot be solved with infinite desires on the one side and only finite objects on the other, he calmly suppresses the former. Make your desires zero, he says, and your equation will be more than satisfactory.

Our wonderful mathematician has become a senseless metaphysician. Such a solution is no solution at all. By what right does our magician suppress the infinite desires of man? Try as he may, he will not succeed, for they are founded in his very nature. Without such desires, man would not be man. No, they cannot be suppressed. They exist and will ever exist, in this world. But is there then no solution to the problem? Indeed there is. Given infinite desires in man, there must also be given an infinite object adequate to those desires, for «Nature does nothing in vain» says an old axiom. A *natural* desire without an object would be unintelligible. Not finding any adequate object in this world, Carlyle concludes that none exists and solves the question by suppressing it. False conclusion, illogical method. There is no adequate object *in this world*, therefore one must exist elsewhere. And indeed, after this life there is another, where man's desires will be amply satisfied, provided he attain the end appointed him by his Creator.

Thus do we refute Carlyle's solution. As to the real *Origin of Evil*, we shall here give it in a few words. The state of the question is this: «How came there to be *physical* evil in this world, which is the creation of an all-wise, all-powerful and all-good God?» We say *physical* evil, for moral evil, being directly opposed to God could not in any way come from Him. And in answer to our question, we say that many evils which afflict man, come from his foolishness or the perversity of his will. But there are other evils which do not take their rise in these sources. Whence do they come? Various solutions have been proposed. Some deny the existence of God; others the existence of evil; others still admit both, but call evil a good since it leads us to God (1); still another solu-

of pain which is so terrible a factor in the world and which even now makes its victims day by day and has its altars in the land » («Intentions» *The Critic as Artist*, p. 107).

(1) Carlyle himself refutes this opinion. «I want health, health, health! On this subject I am becoming quite furious; my torments are greater than I am able to bear. If I do not soon recover, I am miserable for ever and ever. They talk of the *benefit of ill-health in a moral point of view*. I declare solemnly, without exaggeration, that I impute nine-tenths of my present wretchedness, and rather more than nine-tenths of all my faults, to this infernal disorder in the stomach » (*Journal*. Last Day of 1823). Very true, Mr. Carlyle. If you are not a saint, suffering will not make you one. To derive profit from suffering supposes a certain degree of sanctity in the patient. A few years later he wrote again in his *Diary* (Jan. 1827) «I will maintain, and

tion denies evil by making it a necessary condition for good. All these attempts at a solution of the question are defective in one way or other. For a complete solution of the question we must turn to theology. Evil exists. God exists. Christian theology shows that physical evil in this actual world is the result of sin. When man came from the hand of God, he was endowed with a supernatural force, whereby he ruled the world, for the world was not naturally subject to man. He was to become its master by conquest rather than by a free disposition of God. The supernatural power with which he was endowed, was destined to enable him to render the material world subservient to his use. But man enjoyed freewill. He was free to act according to the will of God or not. He sinned and by the very fact, became the enemy of God who withdrew the supernatural force by which man governed the world. Left to themselves, the physical laws of nature broke loose and by frequent collision with man, inflict on him innumerable woes, and worst of all, death.

By the Redemption, however, man was freed from eternal punishment and recovered his birth-right to the kingdom of Heaven. But he was not restored to his primitive state wherein he governed the world by a supernatural power. He had to suffer, but by an admirable disposition of divine mercy, the very means of expiation — suffering — became a source of merit. Man may love sufferings, but not for their own sake. They are evil and in themselves repugnant. But when accepted in a spirit of expiation and as a source of merit, they are highly commendable. Did Carlyle view them in this light? We shall see presently.

II.

To renounce pleasure, to accept suffering and death is but a half duty — the passive duty of man, says Carlyle. The other half (which somewhere he calls the whole) consists in *action*, in *work*.

For Carlyle, work is a « necessity », the « universal law of nature », the « first law of our existence », the « eternal law of nature for man », his « whole duty », « man's very mission on earth »; it is a « dispeller of doubts », a « panacea for evils », the « necessary condition of happiness » (1). Among all these attributes of work, there is one on which Carlyle harps incessantly, and that is DUTY. Carlyle has been repea-

appeal to all competent judges, that no evil conscience with a good nervous system ever caused one-tenth part of the misery that a bad nervous system, conjoined with the best conscience in nature, will always produce. What follows then? Pay off your moralist and hire two apothecaries and two cooks ».

(1) Cf. *supra*. Chapters II and III.

tedly called a «great moral force» (1). But we may ask, what is the basis of his morality? Why *must* man suffer? Why *must* he work?...

We are not alone to ask this question. Doubtless all critics of Carlyle put the same question to themselves, but not all answer it. We make our own the answer of John Nichol who says: «Carlyle's practical Ethics... are more satisfactory than his conception of their sanction, which is grim. His «Duty» is a categorical imperative, imposed from with-out by a taskmaster who has written in flame across the sky, 'Obey, unprofitable servant'» (2).

And indeed, never did mortal man utter such violent and frequent vociferations about duty and obligation as Carlyle, yet without ever determining the basis of his morality. One will search his works in vain for any other lawgiver than a categorical imperative, which he frequently, it is true, calls God's law written in the heart of man, but what can that mean for one who did not believe firmly in the existence of God?

Even Froude cannot help us here. «Duty», he writes (3) «was the deepest of all realities (for Carlyle) but the origin of duty, for all Mill could tell might be the tendency of right action to promote the general happiness of mankind. Such general happiness doubtless could be best promoted by each person developing his own powers. Carlyle insisted that every man had a special task assigned to him, which it was his business to discover. But the question remained, *by whom and how* the task was assigned; and the truth might only be that men *in fact* were born with various qualities and that the general good was most effectually promoted by the special cultivation of those faculties».

In his next volume (4) Froude has this lucid passage which does not admit of any equivocation. «We did not come into this world with *rights* which we were entitled to claim, but with *duties* which we were ordered to do (By whom? we ask). *Rights* men had none, save to be governed justly. *Duties* waited for him everywhere (Poor man!) Their business was to find what those duties were and faithfully fulfil them».

Carlyle himself confessed that he did not understand morals. «I cannot understand *Morals*. Our current Moral Law (even that of philosophers) affronts me with all manner of perplexities. *Punishment* neither is nor can be in proportion to fault» (5) Why then did he not shut his

(1) Goethe to Eckermann in 1827; B. W. Matz, op. cit., p. 1; J. G. Robertson, in his article on *Carlyle* in the Cambridge History of English Literature. Vol. XIII, p. 22, edit. 1916.

(2) Op. cit., p. 225.

(3) Vol. II, pp. 375-6.

(4) Vol. III, p. 13.

(5) *Journal*, Aug. 8, 1832.

« sweet mouth » and hold his peace, one may ask with indignation? The « *de facto* » feeling of duty was sufficient for him.

Carlyle *felt* that he had a moral conscience in him. It was a *fact*, a most immediately evident fact. Man must do good and avoid evil. But every obligation supposes a law, and every law a lawgiver. Now who imposes the obligation on man to act according to his reason? Kant contends that it is one's own (practical) reason which binds one, which issues law for one's own conduct. Hence arises the autonomy of the moral law which is « impressed on the will by the practical reason and revealed to us by immediate consciousness » (1). Every one is his own lawgiver, since it is he who interprets the moral law in his own case... Not so, we say. « To command is an act of jurisdiction; and jurisdiction like justice requires a distinction of persons, one ruler and another subject » (2). But the reason of man is not a distinct subject. Together with the will and other faculties in man, it forms but one subject which cannot consequently command itself. But without a law, there is no obligation, and self-acting laws are unintelligible.

Without reference to God, the Supreme Lawgiver, there is no such thing as morality (3). Moral evil alone is *sin*. « Away from God, there is *indecent* and *impropriety*, *unreasonableness*, *abomination* and *brutality*, all this in view of outraged humanity : there is likewise *crime* against the State : but the formal element of *sin* is wanting » (4). Sin is an offence against God. But what is contrary to reason offends God and is forbidden by divine law. Thus only can morality be founded on a solid basis. Carlyle did not admit this basis and hence all his preaching about our duties, our obligation to work, to suffer, to utter no falsehood, to be sincere, and the rest, is unfounded and unsanctioned.

And indeed, as regards sanctions. The reward he promises for well-doing is paltry compared with the punishment awaiting the wicked. As a reward for work he offers none but the mere satisfaction of getting it done (5). Having no other himself (6) how could he promise more?

He calls those happy who make a duty out of necessity. We call them poor, miserable beings, — slaves. « To make virtue out of necessity »

(1) William Turner, op. cit., p. 542.

(2) Rickaby, op. cit., p. 117.

(3) We are aware of the fact that numerous attempts have been made from age to age to establish a moral system independent of God and even without obligation, but they have all been without success. We leave to Moralists the exposition and refutation of such systems.

(4) Rickaby. op. cit. p. 125.

(5) Cf. supra. Ch. III, p. 27.

(6) Cf. supra. Ch. II, p. 24.

is possible and even meritorious, but to act without a higher motive than simply to yield to necessity — this is not virtue, but slavery.

It is true that man, of necessity, must act. All life on this earth consists essentially in motion. Carlyle is right when he calls this the universal law of nature, the eternal law of man. He is right too when he says « the end of man is an action », but we shall see in what sense later.

III.

Now what is to be thought of Carlyle's anti-intellectualism? According to him Metaphysics is a barren science, Logic leads to skepticism, Reason is unable to attain deep truths. True vision lies in the heart, belief is founded on experience, conviction is possible only through action. True thought comes from below the region of conscious deliberation, namely from the subconsciousness. Here take their rise all true works of art, all advances in science, all sorts of creation. Reason manufactures, but manufacture is trivial; creation alone is great.

From all these traits we can easily conclude that Carlyle is an Intuitionist. To consider him under that light alone, would afford matter for a separate study, especially were one to contrast him with Mr. Bergson, the French Philosopher. The father of « la philosophie nouvelle » has elaborated a complicated method which he attempts to explain at length. Carlyle was no philosopher. He rather used the intuitive method than discoursed about it. Still we cannot avoid treating the subject, as it was owing largely to this method that Carlyle became an Activist, after having been led to skepticism by criticism. We shall be brief, indicating the broad lines rather than exhausting the subject.

What is meant by intuition? (1). Unfortunately the word has suffered greatly at the hands of philosophers. Finally it has come to be so general as to express almost anything vaguely and nothing very clearly. We shall strive to put a little order into our notions by a precision of the term in question.

In its primitive acceptation, as appears from the latin, « *intueri* », intuition means the apprehension of an object by the eyes, — hence a *direct, immediate* act. It is this which opposes it to discursion, which is essentially mediate.

There are several kinds of intuition. First there is what is called *sensory* intuition, which is the direct perception of an object by a sense. It may be either external or internal, according as the term is applied to the activity of the internal or external senses. This intuition is rather

(1) For a short but good treatment of the different kinds of intuition, see the recent work of M. T.-L. Penido entitled *La Méthode Intuitive de M. Bergson*. Cf. especially, pp. 123-139.

objective as it regards the objective unity of a sensation. But every perception has a subjective aspect by which the subject refers all his sensations to himself. It is *he* who feels, who sees, who hears, etc... This subjective aspect of sensations is called *apperception*, which is another kind of intuition. These two forms are common to all men. All perceive and « apperceive ». But not all perceive the *whole* contents of a sensation. Most men are governed by the law of interest. They perceive only what is of personal interest to them. To a chosen few is given the precious faculty of *esthetic intuition*. The domain of the artist is precisely among those realities which lie hidden to the vulgar eye.

Of more importance are the two following kinds of intuition — the creative or *infrarational*, and the intellectual.

It is of the greatest importance to distinguish these two, as one is the height of perfection while the other may generate error along with truth.

The first is called creative or *infrarational*. It may be defined as a sort of inspiration, an internal impulse, by which the artist, the inventor, or the scholar is enabled to conceive something new. Once conceived, the same impulse presides at the production of its object (1). It is to this sort of intuition that masterpieces in art owe their origin, that explicative hypostheses in science are due and that we owe our deepest and most personal ideas.

Intellectual intuition is the clear immediate vision of evidence, — in one word, the *act* of the intellect. It may exist in a simple proposition or in the conclusion of a long ratiocination. We have recourse to an intellectual intuition every time we wish to obtain a synthetical view of any complicated subject we have been analysing.

Some philosophers, basing themselves on Plato's *Symposium*, affirm

(1) Mr. H. Bergson has admirably well described this inspiration. He says: « Quiconque s'est essayé à la composition littéraire sait bien que, lorsque le sujet a été longuement étudié, tous les documents recueillis, toutes les notes prises, il faut, pour aborder le travail de composition lui-même, quelque chose de plus, un effort, souvent très pénible, pour se placer tout d'un coup au coeur même du sujet et pour aller chercher, aussi profondément que possible, une impulsion à laquelle il n'y aura plus ensuite qu'à se laisser aller. Cette impulsion, une fois reçue, lance l'esprit sur un chemin où il retrouve et les renseignements qu'il avait recueillis et mille autres détails encore; elle se développe, elle s'analyse elle-même en termes dont l'énumération se poursuivrait sans fin; plus on va, plus on découvre; jamais on n'arrivera à tout dire. Et pourtant, si l'on se retourne brusquement vers l'impulsion qu'on sent derrière soi, pour la saisir, elle se dérobe; car ce n'était pas une chose, mais une direction de mouvement, et, bien qu'indéfiniment extensible, elle est la simplicité même », (*Introduction à la Métaphysique*, p. 35. Rev. de Métaph. et de Morale, t. 11, janvier, 1903).

the existence or the possibility of a higher kind of intuition, -- *supra-rational* — whereby «binary conclusions» or antinomies are united in *συστηματὶς ἀνωτάτης* v (1).

All these forms of intuition are clearly distinct and will cause no confusion to an orderly mind. But by intuition, the ordinary people usually understand: divination, spontaneous knowledge, conclusion come to more or less directly. Taken in this sense, intuition is the result of a sort of logic inherent to our imaginative schemas. By means of these generic schemas, conclusions are drawn almost or even altogether unconsciously (2) The «intuitive method» we wish to speak of, is to be taken mainly in this last sense, i.e. as a sort of divination.

Such, we say, was Carlyle's own method, and to it must be attributed much that is faulty in his works.

That he preferred the intuitive method to the logical is attested by several of his critics and most trustworthy of all, by Carlyle himself. In Sartor Resartus, for instance, he says that «Teufelsdröckh's method is not, in any case, that of common school Logic... but at best that of practical Reason proceeding by large *Intuition* over whole systematic groups and kingdoms: whereby we might say, a noble complexity... reigns in his Philosophy... a mighty maze, yet, as faith whispers, not without a plan» (3). We see the complexity very well, but at times, with all our efforts, we fail to discover the plan.

Carlyle's numerous vituperations of reasoning are so many encumbrances of intuition.

(1) Cf. Penido, op. cit., pp. 137-9.

(2) This is well explained by Mr. Penido (op. cit., p. 133). «Avoir de l'expérience consiste à rapprocher entre eux les cas singuliers de même espèce, acquis à la mémoire. Et il est indubitable que l'une des grandes lois de la vie sensitive est celle de la fusion des éléments psychologiques semblables. Une série de sensations particulières à un même objet engendrent dans l'esprit des images analogues. Celles-ci, s'attirant mutuellement, finissent par s'associer ou par se combiner en un schéma générique, souvent confondu avec idée générale. Surgisse maintenant une expérience nouvelle, mais de même genre, nous assisterons tout de suite au *fonctionnement automatique* d'une sorte de raison sensitive. Liée par sa nature même au «hic et nunc», elle est toute pratique, et ses inférences extrêmement rapides ne se rapportent qu'à des cas concrets, particuliers.

» Cette logique des images, que nous voyons si bien en jeu dans certains rêves, rend parfaitement raison, sans une intervention de l'intelligence, de ce que Leibnitz appelle très bien «les consécutions des bêtes». Elle explique également la plupart des «divinations» rencontrées plus haut, surtout si l'on tient compte que l'intellect, à force de s'exercer, acquiert des habitudes donnant une grande rapidité à ses inférences; beaucoup des soi-disant intuitions sont, au fond, des conclusions peu ou pas conscientes».

(3) *Sartor Resartus*. Bk. I, Ch. 8, p. 31.

Sympathy for a thing, Carlyle considers as essential to a right understanding of that thing. He says: « To know a thing, what we can call knowing, a man must first *love* the thing, sympathise with it » (1). In his *Journal* for Feb. 1829, he notes the same truth: « Without love there is no knowledge ». And again « *Oliver Cromwell* will not prosper with me at all. I began reading about that subject some four months ago. I learn almost nothing by reading, yet cannot as yet heartily begin to write. Nothing on paper yet. I know not where to begin. I have not yet got through the veil, got into genuine *sympathy* with the thing » (2). Now this sympathy is a preliminary of intuition. By sympathy we enter into the heart of a thing, we get at its vital principle. Once in possession of that, we *live* the thing in its complexity. It is reproduced in us as it is in itself. This alone constitutes knowledge. By reason we revolve about a thing, but never get at the heart of it. So say the Intuitives (3).

Cazamian (4) notices the same tendency in our author. He says: « Richter is for Carlyle, the perfect type of the intuitive intelligence (5); of that fruitful violence which thought does to things, which breaks them, in some sort, to come to the kernel of truth, without stopping, according to the logical method, to finish the patient siege. And that is just the expression of Carlyle's own instinctive, procedures. To prudent, slow progress, to the attempt at clearness, to the analysis of rational reflection, he was to oppose immediate victories, the superior certitude of knowledge by intuition; he was to be all his life the scornful adversary of rationalism » (6).

Taine (7) after describing the intuitive method such as we understand it in this case, applies it to Carlyle. Then he justly remarks: The

(1) *Heroes*. Lecture III, p. 264.

(2) *Journal*. Dec. 26, 1840.

(3) Cf. Bergson's works, or if the reader wishes to have a short but faithful exposition of Bergson's intuitive method, he may consult the recent work of Dr. Penido already quoted. F. Grandjean, the « Bergsonian High priest of Switzerland », in a criticism of the work in question, says that the writer has fully *understood* Bergson's doctrine, — which is saying a great deal.

(4) *Op. cit.*, p. 51. See also pp. 7, 8, et alibi.

(5) Cf. Carlyle's *Essay Jean Friedrich Richter again*. *Essays*. Vol. II.

(6) Elsewhere (*op. cit.*, p. 8) the same critic has the following which bears out the truth of the last words just quoted. « Fired with instinctive vigour, Carlyle's thought made the theory of its force and its limits; and set up unconsciousness as a virtue and railed those who are governed by the need of perfect clearness ».

(7) « Il (Carlyle) le sait, et prétend fort bien que le génie est une intuition, une vue du dedans (insight)... Sans doute, mais les inconvénients n'y manquent pas non plus, et en premier lieu l'obscurité et la barbarie. Il faut l'étudier laborieusement pour l'entendre, ou bien avoir précisément le même genre d'esprit que lui; mais peu de gens sont critiques de métier ou voyants

power of insight or intuition may well be the mark of genius, it may have its merits, but its drawbacks are not wanting either. It is hazardous. It is obscure. If the reader does not enjoy the same intuition as the writer, if he does not feel the same sympathy, he will find nothing but enigmas. The intuitive seldom proves his statements. He does not argue. We must believe him on his word or have no part with him. It is true that he alone creates. This is his great merit, but what if his creation be not true? Methodical minds, so railed at by Carlyle, have at least this advantage viz. that they can verify all their steps. And without verification what progress can be called true? One gifted intuitive man holds one thing, another — no less gifted — may affirm the contrary. Which is right? Reason alone can decide.

We admit the advantages of intuition as the source of artistic creation, of intellectual and material progress, but we insist in the necessity of verification, on submitting the new object of intuition to a rational criticism. It is only when this final stage of the intellectual process is dispensed with that intuition as a method become dangerous. Carlyle was an intuitive to the almost utter exclusion of reason. Consequently it is not surprising that errors abound in his works. He affirms and he denies, — and that in the most vehement manner — without taking much pains to ascertain the true. It is almost impossible to conceive how a learned man could make such objectively groundless statements as we find in Carlyle (1). In matters of religion he shows a gross ignorance (2). Even in history, where he is regarded by some as an authority, he affirms what pleases him and denies what does not. Frequently he proceeds *a priori*. For instance, when he speaks of his Heroes, he refuses to believe certain historical facts of them. He affirms that such acts could never come from great men. But my dear Mr. Carlyle, you're trying to prove that your

de nature; en générale, on écrit pour être compris, et il est fâcheux d'aboutir aux énigmes. Ce procédé de visionnaire est hasardeux; quand on veut sauter du premier coup dans l'idée intime et génératrice on court risque de tomber à côté; la démarche progressive est plus lente, mais plus sûre; les méthodiques, tant raillés par Carlyle, ont au moins sur lui l'avantage de pouvoir vérifier tous leur pas. — Ajoutez que ces divinations et ces affirmations véhémentes sont fort souvent dépourvues de preuves... Tout cela est racheté et au delà par des avantages rares. Il dit vrai: les esprits comme le sien sont les plus féconds. Ils sont presque les seuls qui fassent les découvertes... » (*Histoire de la Littérature Anglaise*, t. V, pp. 261-267).

(1) His statements may be grounded on *subjective* reasons — prejudice etc. but fortunately truth (objective) does not depend on the whims of individuals. We are testing the value of intuition as a means to the attainment of truth and we find it wanting.

(2) His notion of the Pope's infallibility in particular is childish and not worthy of any fair-minded man.

Heroes *were* great men. You take for granted that they were. But what if they really did what you refuse to believe?

Seeing the consequences of the intuitive method, we cannot give it our unqualified approval. Fruitful as it is in creation, it cannot be used exclusively as a method for the attainment of truth. Provided it consent to submit the fruits of its creation to a rational criticism and abide by the decision of that faculty, we readily agree to give it right of city, thankful for its productiveness.

IV.

Carlyle is an Activist. He became such by the intuitive method. Giving full scope to his vital energies, as he says, he let them work unheeded. A sort of unconsciousness, psychologists tell us, is the most favorable mood for intuition. The new element rises up from the subconscious region. It takes possession first of the mind and then by *intrapersonal* diffusion tends to express itself in emotions and not unfrequently in exterior actions.

But intuitions do not come from nothing. They have their origin in that mass of subconscious elements which each one possesses. By observation, by personal experience, by study, one may enrich one's store of conscious and subconscious elements and thus increase the possibility of personal productiveness and in a way, determine the quality of one's creature.

From what elements did Carlyle's Activism take its rise? How did he come to consider *action* as the one essential of life? By observation and by experience, as well as by the imperative voice of his categorical moral conscience.

And indeed, we see that action is necessary for life. Were a living being to cease acting, it would cease to live. Nature herself is in constant movement. To her testimony we may add that internal impulse by which man is led to act. The incessant working of his mind tends to set the body in motion.

On a higher level we have the testimony of conscience, the audible voice of Nature speaking to man. We feel that we are born to work (1). Work is a moral necessity, a duty, and whether we admit the existence of God as the foundation of all moral obligation or not, we have the consciousness of our duty.

But if work is a duty, it is not without its happiness. Carlyle says that work is the *only* source of true happiness. While not agreeing with

(1) Cf. *supra*. Ch. III, p. 27.

him altogether, we remark that there is a certain happiness connected with work, which far surpasses the vulgar pleasures of the senses. The moderate exercise of any faculty has an agreeable tonality i.e. is accompanied with pleasure. The total inhibition or the over-exercise of a faculty usually results in pain. While this is the general rule, we may remark that even overwork, when resulting in success, is a source of great pleasure, — pleasure arising from obstacles triumphantly overcome. This superior pleasure was not unknown to Carlyle. He sacrificed all, even his health, to obtain it. The advantage of pleasure rising out of fruitful activity, over the vile pleasures of sense, is that the former is accompanied with the approval and not the reproach of conscience. Nothing more was needed for Carlyle. Finding his conscience ceased to torment him when he worked seriously at something, he easily concluded that he was in the right, and probed no further to discover the reason of that satisfaction which necessarily accompanies « duties well performed and days well spent ».

Being thus put on the right road by observing nature, Carlyle willingly continued at her school. From her he learned another truth of which he made great use, viz. that Might everywhere prevails over weakness. But unless Might be identical with Right, Nature evidently, contradicts herself, a supposition which our philosophical principles do not allow us to harbor. From this the step to Hero-worship, the cult of might, or superiority in its several forms is but small. And the Hero, the Great Man, the man of Might, has a right to rule — hence the divine right of Kings.

Thus we see how all Carlyle's doctrine, or at least that part of it which centers about Activism is the development of an intuition. Had he submitted his intuition to a rational criticism, he would have seen that Activism, as he conceived it, is only a partial truth, or if action be really the law of our existence and our destiny, it would have shown him that contemplation is no less an activity than work, and that reasoning is the means thereto. He would still have said « the end of man is an action », but he would not have added « and not a thought ». By reasoning he would have come to the knowledge, of God, the Lawgiver. Knowing Him, he would not have believed that Might is Right, but would have understood that Might often triumphs over Right in this world. but that full justice will be had in the world to come. Faith in Might, having disappeared, he would have understood that *Truth* is right and that all right to rule, all authority is divine, coming from the Author of truth.

We are affirming much, but we shall endeavor to prove our statements in our next and last chapter.

CHAPTER VI.

True Activism.

Hitherto we have undermined the foundations of Carlyle's doctrinal edifice to such an extent as to imperil its very existence, but unwilling as we are to witness the fall of so noble a monument and desirous of saving some precious material or half-truths contained therein, we hasten to replace the missing keystone and to establish the doctrine on a solid basis. This we shall endeavor to do by showing just what part « Action » can have in our lives, or in how far we can be true Activists.

I.

Supposing man to be a rational being endowed with free will, and believing firmly in the power of reason, when aided by faith, to solve the various problems which torment him, we proceed to explain the great question which has occupied us all along, viz. the problem of life.

There is a principle of philosophy to the effect that « every agent acts for some end — omne agens agit propter aliquem finem ». To act for an end, is to act from a *motive*, with a *purpose*, *plan* or *design* for the attainment of something. Thus the end or the « something wished-for » *moves*, *allures* or *induces* the efficient cause to act. In this sense, namely in the intention of the agent, the end is prior to all action. It also directs the choice of means proper to the end and thus presides over the execution of the action. Lastly it is attained and in the attainment, the agent finds rest.

It can be proved that animals, plants and unconscious agents act for an end, each in its own way, but here we are concerned solely with man and only in so far as he acts as man i.e. deliberately and voluntarily. We say that man performs all his human acts for some end. That there *must* be an end intended in every action appears from the fact that nothing indetermined can act (1). For that which is, indifferently disposed to produce many and even contrary effects, is not inclined to produce one more than another (2), and unless some determining motive (end)

(1) The agent must be determined, we say, but this in no wise does away with free-will in man. Yes, even he must be determined before he can act, but in his case there is *autodetermination* and thus the principle holds good even in face of human freedom.

(2) Cf. *Summa theo.*, Ia, IIæ. Q. I. Art. 4. c.

intervene, no action will take place, as nothing indetermined can exist in nature. Therefore in order to act, man must have some end in view.

Now an end is either objective or subjective. The objective end is the end wished for, as it exists distinct from the subject who wishes it. The subjective end is the possession by the subject of the good aimed at.

But the desired end is *good*, — real or supposed — as appears from the very definition of good. « That which is desirable ». Therefore every action is done for an end which is regarded by the agent in the light of something good (1).

Going further, we say that every human action is produced for some *ultimate* end. By an ultimate end we understand that which is desired for itself and not in view of some ulterior end. The necessity of an ultimate end appears from the consideration that the end *moves* to action (2) Without a determined end in view, no action is possible (3). If an end be desired for itself, it is a last end; if for another, it becomes a means to that ulterior end on which it depends for movement, for the same relation exists between the end and the activity of the agent as between cause and effect. But a series of dependent causes, essentially subordinated, is unintelligible without a first cause which moves the rest, for the first cause being taken away, all the others cease to act. Now the ultimate end is the first cause in a series of actions. Therefore every action must have an ultimate end. There cannot be several ultimate ends, for in that case, no one would be the last. Neither can all the ends be intermediate, for they are such only with respect to a last end.

There is one ultimate end for all the human acts of a given individual. And what is true of one, is true of all. All men seek *happiness* in one shape or other. All their actions are done with this intent that it may be well with them and theirs. Life is for happiness. Nature has so disposed man that he seeks happiness in every act. This admits of no discussion. Whether men know it or not, they all agree in this. Where they differ is in the choice of the *objective* end. For some, it is riches, for others virtue, for others science, and so on. But whether they seek happiness in this, or in that, it is a fact that they seek their good, their well-being. Now the good of a being is its perfection, for that which is desirable is adapted to its nature (*conveniens*) and that which is adapted to its nature perfects. Therefore all men seek their perfection, and perfection is the end of man.

A thing may be perfect in a three-fold manner in its essence, in its

(1) *III Contra Gentiles*. C. 3.

(2) *Summa theo.*, Ia, IIae. Q. I. Art. 4.

(3) The end may coincide with the action — as contemplation for contemplation's sake, — but it exists nevertheless.

accidents and in its end (1). In the notion of perfection is contained the idea of completeness. That thing is perfect which lacks nothing of what is due to its nature. Thus, for instance, a man is perfect in his essence if he has a soul and body. This is essential perfection. Accidental perfection is that which is superadded to a being already existent. It may consist in action or in the attainment of an end. The perfection of a musician, as such, is the act of playing, while the perfection of an architect is rather in the result of his action, in the house he builds. He who attains his end acquires a great perfection, for end and perfection are seen to be inseparably related (2). Now the end is attained through action. Hence it is clear that happiness, the supreme good and end of man is an act not a state, for perfection does not consist in the *being able* to do a thing but in the actual doing of that thing. Perfection is an act, — the ultimate «second act» of a thing — and not a mere possibility or potentiality.

But action is twofold, transient and immanent. The term of the former is not the agent, but an object distinct from him, as we see in the action of cutting, for instance. Happiness cannot consist in such an act, as it perfects rather the object than the agent. The second is in the agent himself, as feeling and understanding and willing: these perfect, the agent. Happiness will be found to be one of these immanent acts. Which? Feeling? Were man merely an animal we might answer yes, but in him we find a higher faculty — one which makes him what he is and distinguishes him from the beast, to wit, an intellect. Now, a principle of philosophy forbids us to seek the end of a being in a faculty which has above it others higher in dignity (3). For example the senses of man have their proper functions, but are subordinated to the intellect, just as the lungs are to the heart. From this we can conclude that the perfection and last end of man consist in the operation of his highest faculty, the intellect. The proper function of man is to act by reason and will and in the discharge of this function alone will he find happiness and attain his end.

«Now the human will acting by reason may do three things. It may regulate the passions... it may direct the understanding and ultimately the members of the body, in order to the production of some practical result in the external world. Lastly it may direct the understanding to speculate and think, contemplate and consider, for mere contemplation's sake. Happiness must take one or other of these three lanes» (4). It

(1) *Summa theo.*, I. Q. VI. Art. 3.

(2) «Ultima perfectio uniuscujusque est in consecutione finis». (*Summa theo.*, I. Q. CIII. Art. I. c.

(3) *Summa theo.*, Ia. Q. LXV. Art. 2.

(4) Rickaby, op. cit., p. 8.

cannot consist in the regulation of the passions, for happiness lies « not in the deliverance from what would degrade man to the level of the brute, but in something which shall raise man to the highest level in human nature. » (1). Nor is it found in the use of the practical understanding with a view to production, for such a use is not an end in itself, but rather a means, since it is ordained to an ulterior end — utility or contemplation.

« *Happiness is the act of the speculative understanding contemplating for contemplation's sake.* This act has all the marks of happiness. It is the highest act of man's highest power. It is the most capable of continuance. It is fraught with pleasure, purest and highest in quality. It is of all acts the most self-sufficient and independent of environment, provided the object be to the mind's eye visible. It is welcome for its own sake, not as leading to any further good. It is the life of ease and leisure: man is busy that he may come to ease » (2).

Such is happiness, the end of man. But let us immediately add that this happiness is not attainable in the mortal life of man. Aristotle himself says so. He considers the happiness he has so well defined as an ideal to be approached in this life — not to be attained. The most we can get here on earth is contentment and a little happiness. But contentment is not the full satisfaction of our desires; it is a mere compromise. And still, we have an inborn desire for *perfect happiness*. This desire comes from nature, since it is found alike in all men. But nature does nothing in vain (3). Therefore there must be an adequate object corresponding to man's infinite desires. An infinite appetite can be satisfied by nothing short of an infinite object. Such does not exist in this world; therefore it must exist in another. The reasoning is peremptory.

II.

We admit the creation of man by God as a philosophical conclusion. Now can we compare the action of God to that of an indifferent clock-maker who winds his instrument and interests himself no more in it? No, God is an intelligent agent and as such, must act for an end. But the end of all His activities can be no other than Himself, otherwise He would be dependent on that other for whom He should act, and by the very fact. He would cease to be God. He has done everything for Himself. Not that He had need of finite creatures for His happiness, but simply to manifest His glory. This is the intention God had in creating man, namely the procuring of His own glory. But in His goodness, God

(1) *Ibid.*

(2) Rickaby, op. cit., p. 9.

(3) « *Natura nihil facit frustra* ».

gave man an end, second only to His own, to His glory. Man was made for everlasting happiness. This secondary end of man is not so inseparably bound up with his primary end that it may not be lost. Unfortunately, man through his own fault, may fall short of his eternal happiness. But God's glory will infallibly be attained, for His almighty will cannot be frustrated. His glory is equally manifested by His goodness towards the Blessed in Heaven and by His justice towards the damned in hell.

Such is the divine plan with regard to man (1). Shall not man respect the plan of his creator? He is free to do so or not — O terrible responsibility! — but according as he conforms his life to the divine plan, or fails to do so, depends his happiness or woe in the life to come.

Finally comes the great question of the use of this present life. By divine favor, man is destined to enjoy perfect happiness in Heaven, — to repose in the contemplation of the Divinity. In the contemplation of the Eternal Truth will man find perfect happiness in the life to come. Then, God will be the object of man's beatitude. But now, in this present, life, what object possessed, can render man happy? No other than the self-same God, known and loved according to man's natural faculties (2). « The mind needs an infinite object to rest upon, though it cannot grasp that object positively in its infinity » (3) Such is the greatness of man!

And here we have the solution of another difficulty. Why the finite creation? Why such a multitude of beings, varying in size, in use, in beauty? For whom such a profusion of bounty on the part of the Creator?... For the Lord of the world, the King of Creation — man. All these were given to man that they might lift him to God. Creatures alone are apprehended or seen by man, and from the creature is gathered the excellence of the Creator. The ascent from the individual to the universal, from the material to the spiritual has been described by Plato (4).

Creatures for man and man for God — this is the order. Thus it appears that creatures are secondary objects of natural happiness. The pleasure they give is not perfect as it is but transitory (5), incomplete, fraught with much evil, — in every way insufficient. Still, some happiness is attainable even in this present life. Temporal happiness must consist in a tendency towards eternal, perfect happiness. It must be

(1) For a solid exposition of this doctrine, see *La vie intérieure simplifiée et ramenée à son fondement*, par le R. P. Tissot.

(2) We speak here as a philosopher. As a Christian we would add « aided by faith and divine grace ».

(3) Rickaby, op. cit., p. 25.

(4) *Symposium*. (210, 211).

(5) This applies even to contemplation in this life. Cf. *Summa theo.*, Ia, IIae. Q. V. Art. 4.

specifically the same, differing only in degree and in the manner of attainment. Therefore even in this life, true happiness must be sought in the knowledge and love of God, as known by natural reason. Hence we take it that the ideal state of man in this world would be a life of contemplation. Should all men give themselves to the contemplation of the divinity, this were indeed an *ideal* world, and antechamber of heaven. How far we are from the ideal! Why such a distance between the ideal and the actual? Let us hear St. Thomas on the subject.

The Angelic Doctor distinguishes two kinds of life — the active and the contemplative (1). The active life, he says, is directed towards external action (2), *operatio ad extra*. However, if external action be made subservient to contemplation, it may assume the dignity and the name of the latter (3), but properly speaking only that life which makes contemplation an end can be called contemplative (4).

Then, when it is question of deciding to which life should be given the preference, St. Thomas says that *in itself* (per se) the contemplative is better and nobler than the active life, and in proof he gives the eight reasons of Aristotle (5) to which he adds a ninth (6). Still, in spite of the excellence of contemplation he says that, considering the necessities of our present existence, the active life is to be preferred, and in this he follows Aristotle who wrote: « Doubtless it is better to acquire philosophy than riches, but in necessity, riches are to be preferred » (7).

Therefore it seems to follow that the active life is more *natural* to man in his present existence. Indeed St. Gregory says (8) that we can remain fixedly in the active life, but cannot long captivate our mind in contemplation. To contemplate eternally will be our lot in the life to come. In spite of this it seems that it is more or less a matter of personal inclination, for the same writer adds: « Some men are so restless that the absence of work would be for them the rudest task » (9). While others, on the contrary are so inclined to repose, that were they to engage in the bustle of exterior occupations, they would succumb at the very outset.

(1) *In Sententiis*. Lib. III. D. XXXV. Q. I, and *Summa Theo.*, IIa, IIae. Q. CLXXIX. Art. 1, 2.

(2) *Summa theo.*, IIa, IIae. Q. CLXXXI. Art. 1.

(3) *Ibid.*, ad 3.

(4) *Summa theo.*, IIa, IIae. Q. LXXXI. Art. 1, ad 5, and Q. CLXXX. Art. 1.

(5) *Ethic.*, X.

(6) *Summa theo.*, IIa, IIae. Q. CLXXXII. Art. 1. c.

(7) *Topic*. III, 21.

(8) *Super. Ezech.*, (Homil. VI).

(9) *Ibid.* Quoted by St. Thomas. IIa, IIae, Q. CLXXXII, Art. 4, ad 3.

Whence it appears that man may give himself to either life according to his inclination. However that may be, there are certain arguments which may be brought forth in favor of the active life. Man is a social being, and consequently has certain obligations towards his fellow men. Now, were he to shut himself up and abstain from all intercourse with his fellows, he would fail to fulfill his obligations. Man must be active. Man must work, for such is the divine command (1). Even before the Fall, work was natural to man. It was and is a law of our nature, a necessity of our being and as our nature will not be changed in the life to come, we shall still work (2) as St. Augustine assures us.

Man has a natural obligation to preserve his life. For this he must eat. But to procure the necessary sustenance, he must labor. This is the great reason making work a necessity, but were this the only argument available, a certain percentage of mankind would seem exempt from labor, viz. the wealthy. Such, however, is not the case. St. Thomas gives four principal reasons for work (3). The first we have already mentioned. Here is the second: « Manual labor is intended to do away with idleness, the source of many evils ». « The idle brain is the devil's workshop », we are told. Rich and poor, great and humble; learned and ignorant, — all fall under this necessity of « keeping busy ». But as St. Thomas remarks in the same article, if one can keep busy otherwise than by working manually, he is free to do so, provided he be not obliged by other reasons to engage in manual labor. The other reasons are these: « The repression of concupiscence by mortification of the body. A person in easy circumstances, for instance, should not choose contemplation as his occupation, if he is subject to violent temptations. He should rather engage in manual work in order to subdue his body and thus prepare himself better to contemplate. Lastly, one must work in order to be able to give those alms which are strictly required by charity.

From all this we would seem to advocate action or the active life. Have we not a good word in favor of contemplation? Indeed we have. With St. Thomas we admit its dignity, its merit, its superior delights, but with him too, we notice its difficulty, its sterility for our neighbor and its unadaptableness to our present existence.

Its dignity, as he tells us, is founded on a two-fold excellence — the excellence of the operation itself, which is the highest in man's power, and the excellence of the object contemplated — God.

(1) *Gen.*, II, 15.

(2) Buathier., op. cit., p. 296.

(3) *Summa theo.*, IIa, IIae. Q. CLXXXVII, Art. 3, c.

Merit is founded on love (1). The actuating principle in the contemplative life is the love of God, while the love of our neighbor is more directly intended in the active life. And as the love of God surpasses the love of creatures (even when supernatural), it follows that divine contemplation is *per se* more meritorious (2). Still it is possible that one may acquire more merit in the work of an active life than another would in the contemplative life; for instance, if, prompted by the love God and through a desire of accomplishing His will and procuring His glory, one were to deprive oneself for a time of the delights of contemplation in order to minister to the needs of his neighbor.

As for the delights inherent to contemplation, little need be said. They are known to them alone who dwell continuously on those sublime heights, or who visit them from time to time. We can, in some measure, conceive their sweetness from the following consideration which we find in St. Thomas (3): « *Unicuique delectabilis est operatio sibi conveniens secundum propriam naturam vel habitum.* — What is proper to each by nature or habit is sweetest for each ». But contemplation of truth is connatural to the rational nature of man and in the act and habit of contemplation he finds his greatest happiness. Add to this the fact that man is inclined towards the object of his contemplation and is incited thereto by divine love (4).

Notwithstanding all these excellencies proper to contemplation, we must not overlook those other characteristics mentioned by the Angelic Doctor. And first, its difficulty. We already quoted St. Gregory to this effect (5). A modern teacher of speculative theology remarks: « Contemplation is the most delightful act possible », but he adds immediately: « ascetics say the *most laborious* ». It would be altogether false to consider contemplation as an idle amusement. In contemplation there is indeed cessation of all exterior motion, but the mind is intensely active (6). « He is not idle » says the Angel of the School, « who devotes himself solely to meditating the word of God ». The man who gives himself to exterior work does not do more than he whose sole occupation consists in the pursuit of truth (7). Contemplation is difficult and not within the reach of all, nor is it lasting — at least in its highest degree (8).

(1) *Summa theo.*, Ia. IIae. Q. CXIV, Art. 4.

(2) *Ibid.*, IIa, IIae. Q. CLXXXII, Art. 2.

(3) *Ibid.*, IIa, IIae. Q. CLXXX, Art. VII, c. and Q. CLXXIX, Art. 1.

(4) *Ibid.*, IIa, IIae. Q. CLXXX, Art. 1.

(5) Cf. *supra*, p. 61.

(6) *Summa theo.*, IIa. IIae. Q. CLXXIX, Art. 1, ad 3; *Aristotle*, III. De Anima (text 28); Balmes, Vol II, p. 491.

(7) *Summa theo.*, IIa, IIae. Q. CLXXXVII, Art. 3.

(8) *Ibid.*, IIa, IIae. Q. CLXXX, Art. 8, ad 2.

Secondly, we say, contemplation *in itself* is useless for our neighbor. We shall shortly show how it can become most useful to him, but we repeat, *in itself*, it benefits only the contemplator.

Lastly we judge it unadapted to our present condition as mortal men. Aristotle says of this life of continued active contemplation: « Such a life will be too good for man; for not as he is man will he so live, but inasmuch as there is a divine element in his composition » (1). Contemplation leads to a life which is too good for man, says the philosopher. Yes, too good for him in his present condition, but not in the life for which the present one is but a preparation. St. Thomas himself tells us that the active life is preferable under the *actual* circumstances, though *absolutely* speaking the contemplative life is better. « It is not impossible » he says, « that a thing which in itself is superior to another, be inferior to that other in certain respects » (2) and this he applies to the active and contemplative lives in the way just mentioned.

III

Having exposed both sides of the question, it is now incumbent on us to give some decision. From our exposition, it would appear that the active and contemplative lives are mutually exclusive. But is there not some way to reconcile the two? Is there not a golden mean — a middle country where virtue dwells? Let us open the « Summa » of St. Thomas — that immortal book — and see what is written there on the subject.

Far from disdaining either form of life, the Angelic Doctor accepts both and shows their mutual dependance. The active life, he says, while second in dignity, is first in the order of causality (3). One does not reach the summits of contemplation without first trudging along the valley and slopes of the active life. Were one to attempt it, one would imperil one's eternal salvation. It is St. Gregory who tells us so (4).

(1) Arist. *Ethic.*, X.

(2) *Summa theo.*, IIa, IIae. Q. CLXXXII, Art. 1.

(3) *Summa theo.*, IIa, IIae. Q. CLXXXII, Art. 4. « *Per se* » the contemplative life is first as it directs the active life, but « *Quoad nos* » activity has the priority. Cf. *Ibid.*, ad 1.

(4) « Without the contemplative life they can enter the heavenly country who do not neglect the good which they can do; but without the active life they cannot enter heaven who neglect to do the good in their power ». (Super Ezech., homil. III). Which quotation St. Thomas comments thus: « Whence it follows that the active life is anterior to the contemplative, as that which is common to all, precedes (in via generationis) that which is proper to the perfect ». *Summa theo.*, IIa, IIae. Q. CLXXXII, Art. 4, ad 1.

The active life *disposes* to contemplation by removing obstacles (1). These obstacles are inordinate desires and all passions (2) opposed to the moral virtues. The acquisition of moral virtues though not consisting in *exterior* action, is classified as belonging to the active life (3). For virtues are acquired, *not* by knowledge, but by action (4). This action is *work* — manual, intellectual or moral. By it, one acquires health, wealth, knowledge and the quieting of one's passions, all of which are necessary conditions for fruitful contemplation.

Therefore the active life is *useful* (5). It *leads* to contemplation, and by the very fact is not itself an end. Action is the means, contemplation the end. The means has not its « *raison d'être* » except in view of the end. Action is for contemplation. Hence all those who, like Carlyle, make exterior action the *end of life*, are greatly mistaken. Action must be ordained to contemplation.

Being sufficiently prepared by action, man may give himself to contemplation and find in the exercise of his highest faculty the highest pleasure within the reach of mortal.

But man is man by his will as well as by his intellect. Both together are the principle of all human acts. Hence, for an act to be human, these two faculties must come into play. Real human life cannot make abstraction of the will. Pure speculation, without any reference to the will, is not human, since it proceeds solely from the intellect which is only part of man, not the whole man. Therefore the affections of the will must be united to speculation to render it proper to man. Now what are those affections on which we have so much insisted?... First, a great love of speculation, a vehement desire to contemplate. Then a love of the object contemplated, together with an ardent desire of being inseparably united to that object. And finally, as mai, even when rapt in the ecstasies of divine contemplation, ceases not to be man, he feels the instinct of nature which ordains him for society. Charity for his fellows induces him to leave his *Mount of Delights* for a time. He descends to impart his happiness to others, for « *bonum est diffusivum sui* » and he en-

(1) *Ibid.*, IIa, IIae. Q. CLXXX, Art. 2.

(2) The existence of passions is an obstacle to contemplation as appears from the consideration that passions give rise to a multitude of images, which by dividing the attention prevent contemplation which requires the greatest attention, being the concentration of all one's forces on one point. For other reasons. Cf. Ia, IIae. Q. LXXVII, Art. 2, c.

(3) IIa, IIae. Q. CLXXXI, Art. 1.

(4) « *Ad virtutem quidem scire parum aut nihil prodest* ». (Arist., II, Ethic., cap. 3.

(5) IIa, IIae. Q. CLXXXII, Art. 3.

lightens them as regards their eternal destiny giving them norms of conduct for their present existence. In a word, he

« Allures to brighter worlds and leads the way ».

He descends, but does not stay. Returning, he draws others with him. Every contact of such men with the world purifies, vivifies, elevates it. They are the salt of the earth (1), the light of the world (2), the city which cannot be hid because seated on a mountain (3). They perform the functions of the *head* for the whole body of mankind.

In the opinion of St. Thomas (4), action — such as teaching and preaching — which has its source in contemplation is better than mere contemplation. For just as it is better to illumine than simply to shine, so is it better to share with others the fruits of contemplation than to continue contemplating alone.

From what precedes, we see the mutual dependence of the active and contemplative lives. Action disposes to contemplation, and contemplation directs actions. Hence the best possible form of life for man, the form which is most congenial for him, is a mixed life — of activity and contemplation (5). Purifying himself by external action, man disposes himself to meditation. From meditation he rises to contemplation, and from contemplation he descends to action.

Such, we say, is the *best* form of life for man. But it may be asked whether man be *obliged* to live in this manner. May he not confine himself to action, without ever giving himself to meditation? We answer with an emphatic *No*. Man may not so live. He is no machine, but a rational being, endowed with intellect and free will and capable of human actions. But human actions, as we remarked before, must be performed according to some premeditated plan, for some ultimate end. Now, man comes to know his ultimate end only by deep reflection, by earnest meditation. Once known it should influence all his conduct. Thus, meditation is necessary for human action. But what degree of meditation is required? That varies with the circumstances in which one is placed. Those, for instance, who are placed over others to instruct and direct them, must be well versed in all that is essential to their charge. They must be able to answer for their opinions, to defend, if need be, with rational arguments the doctrine which they teach to others. The sincerity and knowledge of his leaders being ascertained, the ordinary man may give his assent to what is proposed to him on faith, and possessing that solution of his difficulties, he may act accordingly in all security. No

(1-3) *St. Matt.*, V, 13-14.

(4) *Summa theo.*, IIa, IIae. Q. CLXXXVIII, Art. 6.

(5) A particular life is called active or contemplative according as one or the other element predominates.

further reflection is required on his part. But there are some solutions, which, even when accepted on faith, require further thought on the part of every man, — for instance certain religious truths such as man's relations with God, his duty during life, his last end. These must be kept constantly in view or at least frequently recalled. But to recall religious truths, to consider what personal obligations flow therefrom and thus to prepare for active life, is nothing else but to meditate. And to this, every one is held in the degree proper to his state. The active man must lay aside his work from time to time and renew his convictions which lose force by the dimming of the reasons which gave them birth. He must cast a clear glance at the ideal he has chosen for himself. Doing this from time to time, he may give himself to activity and work out his end in the circumstances in which he was placed by his Maker. The contemplative himself, as we noticed before, may give himself to activity and his work will be all the more fruitful as his theoretical knowledge is the greater and the more serviceable. Activity founded on an ideal basis, far from being a vain Idealism, is the only true, practical Realism. Its superiority over mechanical activity in life has been frequently demonstrated. In education, in social activity, in politics, in religion, in every branch, he who is possessed of solid ideas, — yes, we say it in spite of Carlyle — with ideas, with theories proven *philosophically*, he will accomplish something in life, for himself and others.

IV

In our opening chapter we made mention of several philosophies of life. We also remarked that all those which make man his own end are evidently false. But even among false doctrines there are degrees of dignity. Would any reasonable man put a *jouisseur* on the same footing as a philosopher or an activist? They have indeed something in common but an immensurable distance separates them. Both make man his own end, but one drags him down to the level of the brute, while the other takes him for what he is, a rational being.

The dignity of the various philosophies of life depends on the dignity of the faculty, the development of which is its principal aim. Lowest of all are the senses, the pleasures of which satisfy the *jouisseurs*. Next comes the imagination which undoubtedly is nobler, though still immersed in matter. The intellect and the will of man are most worthy of cultivation as they constitute his highest treasure, the crown of his nature. Still, the cultivation of any or all of these faculties for their own sake is unlawful. Man did not make himself. He was created by God, to Whom he belongs entirely. In justice, all his being, his various faculties with their development should be referred to the Creator. Man

must live for God. But living for God does not exclude other activities. On the contrary, it supposes them. A truly religious man, a man who unifies his whole life by the light of a divine principle, can give himself to any form of human activity. He may be a simple laborer, an artist, a scientist, a contemplative, a true activist, or he may in some degree, unite in himself all of these. Then we have the « *Intégral* » aspect of life which consists in the harmonious development of all one's faculties or the perfecting of one's nature, *for the glory of God*. This last phrase is important. Some strive to develop the whole man, but fail to refer the perfection of their being to its Author, and in this, their culture of the *Integral Man* is faulty.

While general culture is desirable, the necessity of specializing imposes itself. Life is short. Art is long. He who would accomplish something must start early in life and continue through long years. Not in fluttering about from one occupation to another, but in constant application to one branch, will he acquire proficiency, and assure the progress of culture and civilization.

The choice of a specialization depends on the individual. By consulting his tastes, his natural inclinations, his aptitudes, or the obligations imposed upon him by his state in life, each should see where he can produce his *maximum of good*, and there he should labor manfully through life.

For the choleric, nothing but exterior action will suffice. His temperament demands it. He *must* act. The inhibition of his activities would be extremely painful. But there are different kinds of activists, not all of whom work with equal fruit.

Some are active, but realize very little. Going from one thing to another like butterflies, they begin a thousand projects, finishing none. These are not *true* activists.

Others there are who work very much, having good health, but little intelligence. They accomplish something but much after the manner of machines. Little given to reflection, they let themselves be led very easily, too easily at times. Not unfrequently they enlist under false banners and devote their energy to the support of unworthy causes. Blind activity is dangerous. Consequently neither are these *true* activists.

Others still, like Carlyle, see a radical opposition between thought and action. They follow the one to the detriment of the other. Instead of being guided in their activity by some conscious ideal, they work for the sake of working, thus accomplishing a self-imposed duty. The result is that they become completely one-sided individuals as do all those who specialize *à outrance*. These are not *true* activists, otherwise Activism would be entirely false since it would sacrifice what is superior to what is inferior — the intellect to the will.

True Activism, as can be gathered from what precedes consists in a life of unusual activity being the realization of some premeditated plan, conceived with a view to the primary end of man. By this definition, we exclude all false activists, as those who work without a plan, those who, though in constant agitation, accomplish exactly *nihil*, those who work well, but fail to refer their activity to their last end.

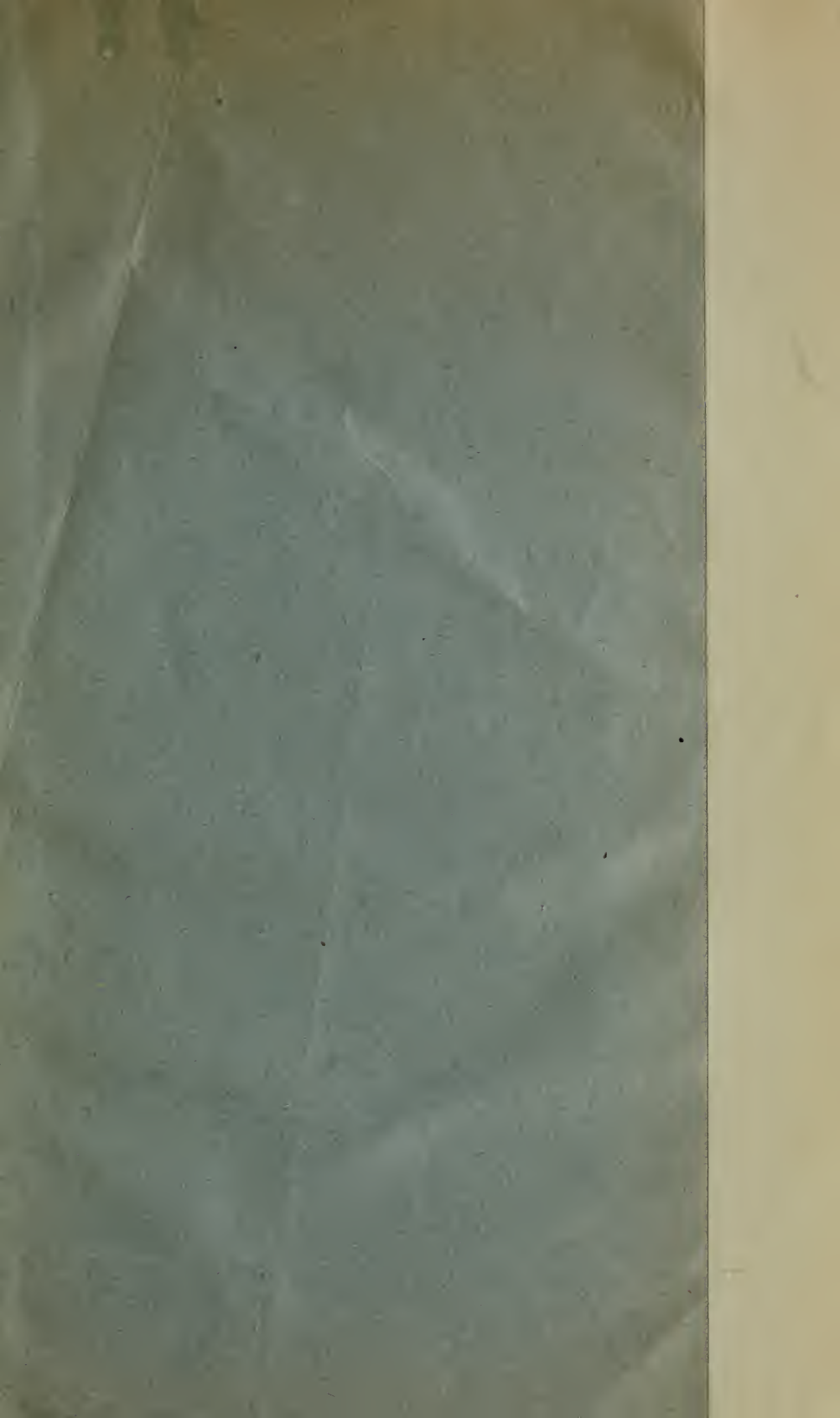
The *true* activist will be a man of limited means, for as a general rule, he who has too many ideas, seldom does much. He hesitates, conjectures, speculates on possible consequences and comes to practical conclusions never or too late.

The *true* activist, either by himself or with the aid of others (1), learns what he has to do. He is conscious that, at times, an hour of reflection spares a month of toil. He does not proceed blindly, but once his plan is made, he sets about its execution with a will. Far from discouraging him, difficulties only serve to urge him on. Without these, victory would be unknown. To sustain him in trying circumstances he has recourse to prayer. And if success finally crown his efforts, he does not take the glory to himself, but refers it to Him to Whom all honor is due (2). If failure is his lot, he is not depressed. It were better to have tried and failed than never to have tried at all. He feels more a man. With renewed hope and more experience he tries again.

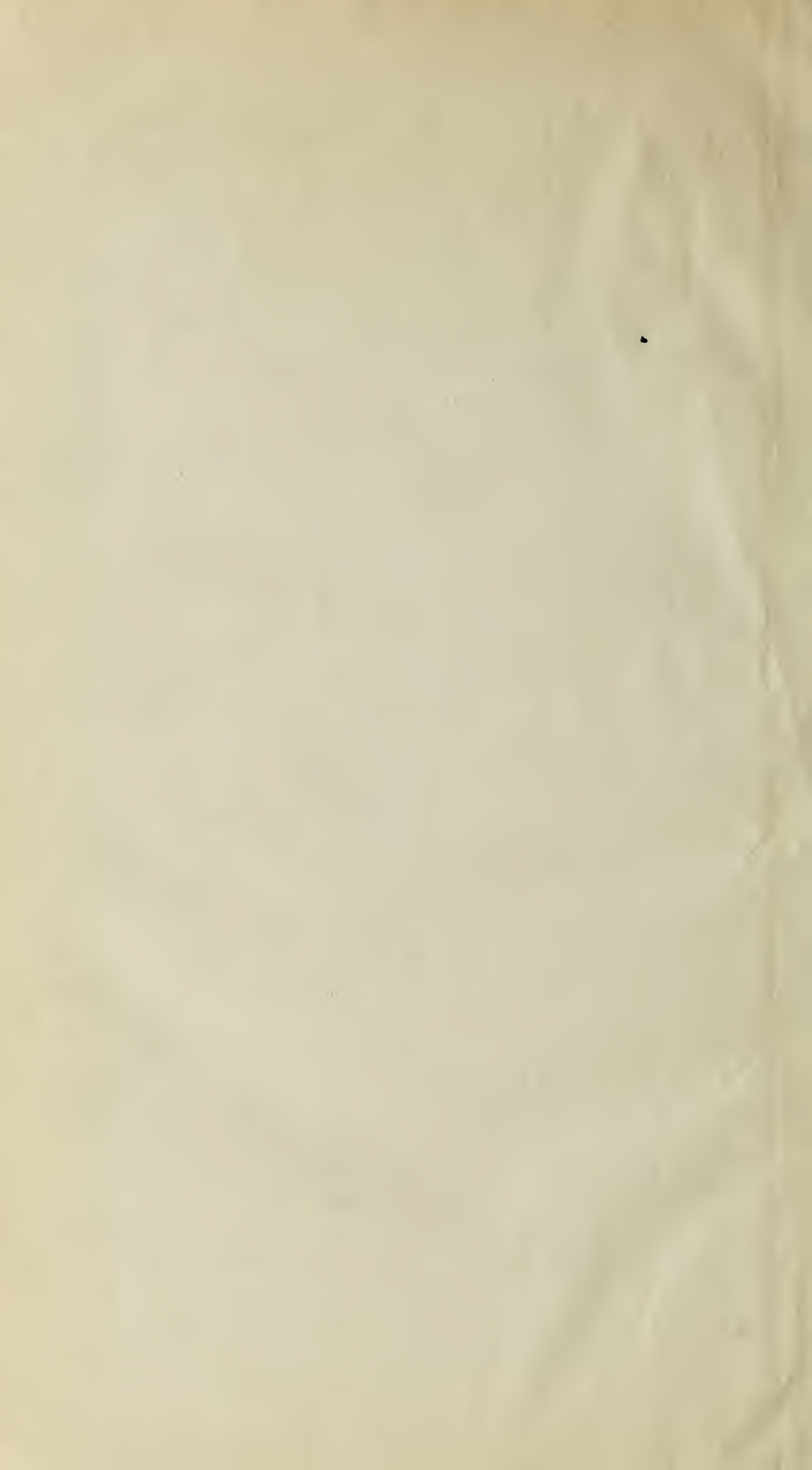
Were men of this type more numerous, the world would be other than it is at the present hour. Had we *true* activists in greater numbers in the various stations of life, material progress, instead of removing man from his Creator would bring him on his way and would be made subservient to his last end, even while ministering to his wants.

(1) This good office may be fulfilled either by competent living authorities or by the reading of good books. Of late, literature in this line has become more abundant. Not to mention any works in particular, let us refer our readers to a sort of bibliography, containing a list of excellent books which may guide the activist in his different activities. We mean the work of Frederic Duval entitled *Les Livres qui s'imposent*.

(2) « Non nobis, Domine, non nobis, sed nomini tuo da gloriam » Ps. CXIII.









UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA



3 0112 073942572